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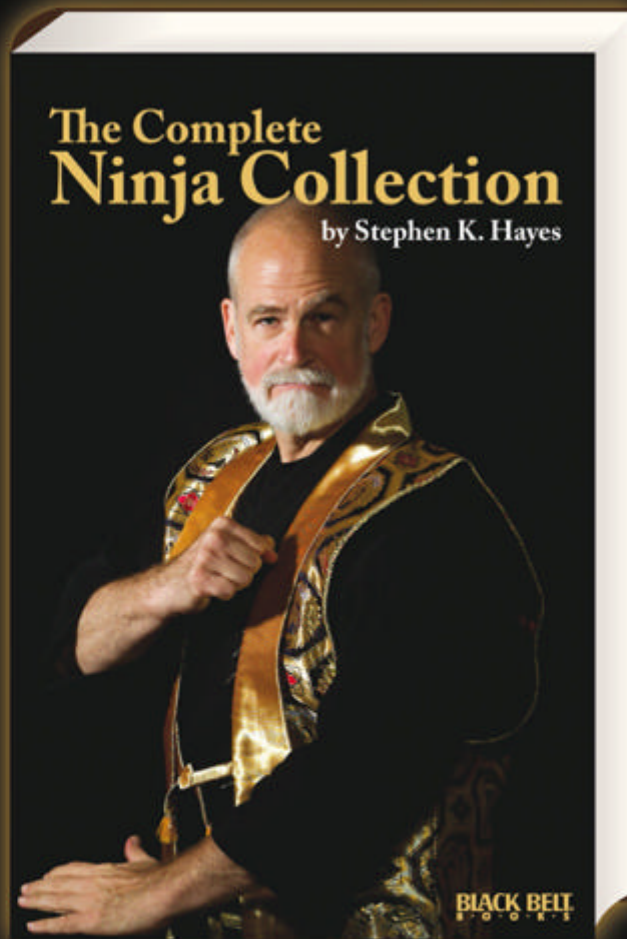
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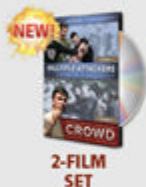
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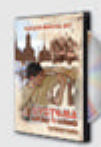
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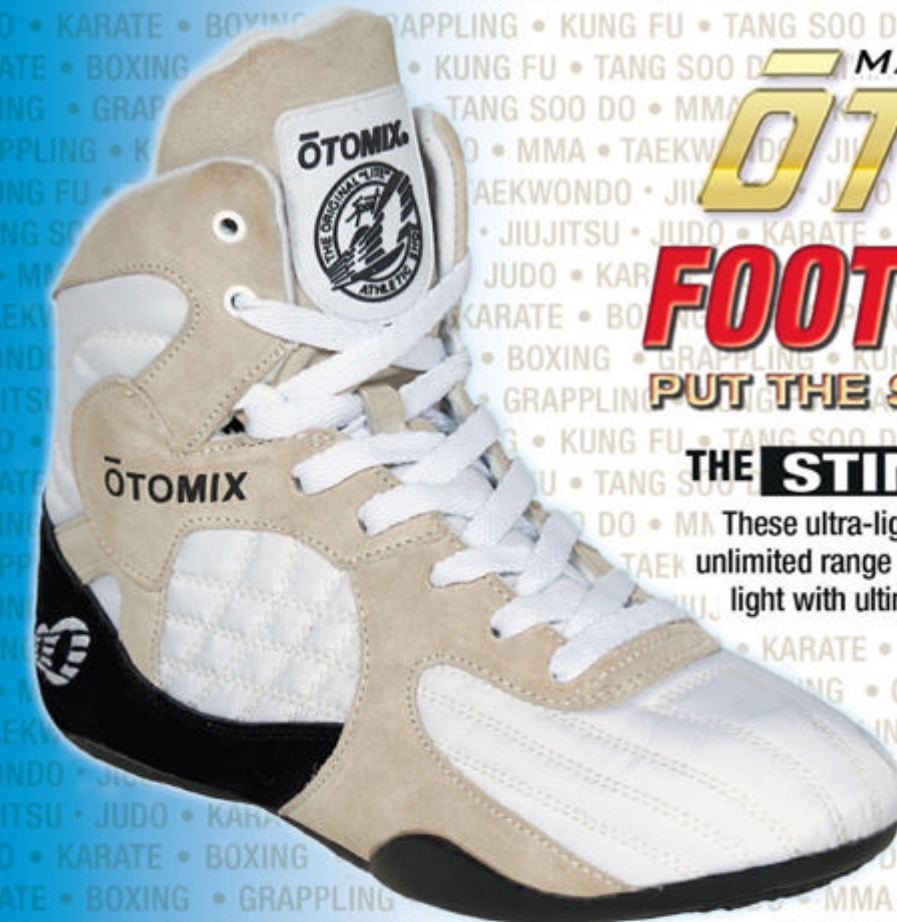
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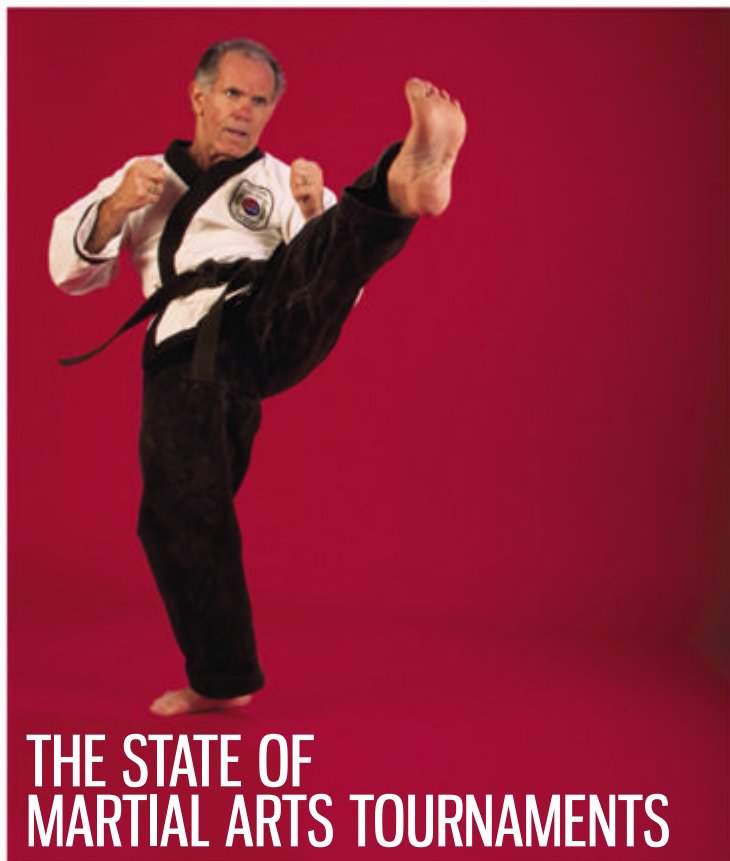
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THE STATE OF MARTIAL ARTS TOURNAMENTS

Having visited various martial arts tournaments during the past year, I have made some observations that I would like to share.

Let us start with the forms competition at these events. I began training in South Korea back in 1963. The name of the organization I trained in was the Moo Duk Kwan, and the style I learned was *tang soo do*. A great deal of emphasis was placed on learning the basics and forms as a foundation for actual fighting, as well as for everyday self-defense. The forms (*hyung* in Korean, *kata* in Japanese) were envisioned as fighting moves against imaginary opponents.

I have always followed this approach in my training and teaching.

At the tournaments I visited, I noted that what was going on had very little to do with practicality. More often than not, the kata performances were not about self-defense; they were slanted toward showmanship — with martial artists doing backflips, dropping into splits and so on.

The real shame about this is that students who shine at this type of flashy training are not learning anything about self-defense. I dread to think of them being caught in a situation in which they need to fight their way out, only to learn that a backflip and a split won't get them out of trouble the way a kick to the groin or a good old-fashioned punch to the mouth would.

The sparring competition at the tournaments also left much to be desired. It looked like the students were playing tag. One player would touch the other with very little power or focus and then run away.

The real shame about all this is that those young people may actually believe this stuff will work in a real self-defense situation. They will quickly find out that all their trophies won't save their butt when a bad guy gets in their face.

The one thing that I've long lamented is that there is not a national martial arts authority to determine the criteria for testing for black belt. In my organization, even after three years of training, a person who doesn't meet the standards can be failed and have to try again three months later. I never want to be responsible for students — young and old, female and male — putting themselves in danger because they thought they could handle a threat while in reality they could not. 🐯

— Pat Johnson, ninth dan
Black Belt Hall of Fame, 1995

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TIMES

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THE RETURN OF RHEE

◆ Phillip Rhee, the *hapkido* and *taekwondo* stylist who produced and acted in the 1989 cult classic *Best of the Best* — and then reprised his role as Tommy Lee in three sequels — is back, and he's about to resurface in an action comedy aimed at families. Titled *Underdog Kids*, the motion picture is written and directed by Rhee.

The new film has an impressive roster of names from both the acting and the martial arts worlds. Co-starring with Rhee are Beau Bridges and Tom Arnold, as well as Mirely Taylor (*Lost*), Adam Irigoyen (*Wizards of Waverly Place*), Ryan Potter (*Big Hero 6*), Cade Sutton (*Kirby Buckets*) and Patrick Fabian (*Better Call Saul*). Among the credited martial artists appearing in the movie are Dan Inosanto, Don Wilson, Jun Chung, Richard Norton and Benny Urquidez.

In the film, Rhee portrays a former MMA champ named Jimmy "The Lightning Bolt" Lee. When a community-center karate team loses its instructor a week before a national competition, Lee returns to his old neighborhood and agrees to train the members. The young martial artists find that their troubles are not over; they must overcome a series of obstacles in order to meet the undefeated Beverly Hills Junior National Karate Team in the tournament.

"I made *Underdog Kids* to celebrate the beauty of the martial arts, to help school owners succeed and to give back to the martial arts community that I love so much," Rhee said. "The basic philosophy of the martial arts — respect, humility, honor and sacrifice — are the reasons we made the film. I wanted to make a clean martial arts movie with family values and substance instead of just making noise and blowing up everything."

The film was conceived to inspire the next generation of martial artists. Fortunately for parents who elect to watch it with their children, it also includes plot elements for adults. "We knew we had something special when we saw the parents quietly crying in the background," Rhee said. "It will make you laugh, cry and cheer at the same time."

Underdog Kids, from Anchor Bay Entertainment, will be available July 7 on DVD and On Demand.

Left to right:
Phillip Rhee, John
Corcoran, Simon
Rhee, Benny
Urquidez



MARTIAL ARTS WRITER/EDITOR HONORED BY MUSEUM

▲ On March 28, 2015, the Martial Arts History Museum celebrated "John Corcoran Day," a tribute to a journalist who used to work for *Black Belt* and for the past 13 years has served as managing editor of *Martial Arts Success*, the trade magazine published by Century Martial Arts.

"We celebrated him because, over the past 41 years, John has written millions of words about the martial arts and its practitioners," said Michael Matsuda, founder and curator of the museum, which is located in Burbank, California. "He has launched or elevated the careers of thousands of black belts and has changed countless other martial artists' lives for the better.

And what better place to honor a black belt for his martial arts history than at the museum that preserves our history?"

The festivities included the showing of a video collage of Corcoran's life, a reading about him and the presentation of a certificate designed by Ed Parker Jr.

"I was honestly stunned when Mr. Matsuda told me about this," Corcoran said. "My first response was, 'You think anyone other than me will show up?' The truth is, martial arts writers get very little attention in our field. We're always writing about everybody else and putting them in the limelight."



VAN DAMME, SEAGAL STILL CRANKING OUT THE MOVIES!

♦ **First up:** Jean-Claude Van Damme. The film is titled *Pound of Flesh*. John Ralston and Charlotte Peters co-star in this motion picture from eOne Entertainment.

Synopsis: In China to donate his kidney to his dying niece, a former black-ops agent awakens the day before the operation to find he's a victim of organ theft. He sets out in search of his stolen kidney so he can save his niece's life.

Release: On May 15, 2015, *Pound of Flesh* hit theaters and became available on iTunes and Video On Demand.

Next up: Steven Seagal. His newest movie is *Code of Honor*. His co-stars include Craig Sheffer (*A River Runs Through It*) and Helena Mattsson (*Iron Man 2*). The film, which is written and directed by Michael Winnick and being made by Premiere Entertainment Group, is in production in Utah.

Synopsis: Seagal plays a Special Forces colonel who recently returned from the Middle East. He discovers that his hometown is now being run by criminals and decides it's time to bring them down.

Release: *Code of Honor* is set for release later in 2015.



Samuel Gagnon,
4-Time WKA World Champion

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ACADEMIC TAEKWONDO CONFERENCE HELD IN NEW MEXICO

▲ On January 23-24, 2015, the International Academic Conference for Taekwondo took place at New Mexico State University. Presenters from the United States, South Korea, Mexico and Canada converged on Las Cruces to participate in the conference, which bore the moniker "Taekwondo as a Martial Art and Martial Sport in 2015: A Collaboration of Physical Training and Academic Discourse for All." It was designed to celebrate the *taekwondo* community's contribution to excellence in education and the art's impact on children and families.

The conference was sponsored by the World Taekwondo Federation, American Taekwondo United, NMSU College of Education, NMSU Honors College and several local entities. Dr. Ken Min,

emeritus professor of the University of California, Berkeley, Martial Arts Program, also supported the event.

In the academic forum, noted scholars and researchers such as professor Yong Chin Pak of Iowa State University and Dr. George Vitale, the first American to earn a Ph.D. in taekwondo from North Korea, spoke on a range of topics, including taekwondo business success, school management, pedagogy, history, philosophy, and injury prevention and treatment.

In the physical-training sessions, World Taekwondo Federation Olympic gold medalists taught alongside an International Taekwon-Do Federation world champion and team coach, marking the first time ever such cooperation had been observed. Specifically, Olympic

gold medalists Byeong Cheol Kim and Je Gyeong Kim taught team building and sparring exercises, while William Howard taught conditioning and stretching drills needed to become an elite competitor.

Before the historic event ended, organizers Dr. Ron Dziwenka (WTF seventh degree, New Mexico State University) and Dr. John A. Johnson (ITF fifth degree, Kyung Hee University in South Korea) announced that the second iACT conference will take place in January 2016 in San Francisco. It will include a business seminar in which masters and school owners can share ideas on growing their studios. For more information, send e-mail to dziwenka@ad.nmsu.edu or mudoknowledge@gmail.com. Or visit iactkd.com.

— John A. Johnson



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NEWS BITES

► **Disney** plans to turn its hit animated movie **Mulan** (1998) into a **live-action** motion picture. No word on who might land the lead.

► The editors of *Black Belt* met with **Tommy Gong**, author of **Bruce Lee: The Evolution of a Martial Artist**, to discuss future book projects pertaining to *jeet kune do*.

► The Dubai-based **Global Fighting Championship** announced that the martial artist who earns his way to the GFC Grand Prix in December 2015 — and goes on to **win** the event — will walk away with **\$1 million**.

► The martial arts-heavy **Netflix** animated series **The Adventures of Puss in Boots** has been **renewed** for a second season.

► **Marti Malloy**, a 2012 Olympic bronze medalist in judo, and **Kayla Harrison**, a 2012 gold medalist, helped Team USA win top honors at the 2015 **New York Open Judo Championship**. The competition featured teams from Cuba, France, Germany and Poland, as well as the USA.

► "It's an honor to represent **Dollamur** [Sport Surfaces] in highly competitive international competitions like the New York Open," said Malloy, who trains under *Black Belt* Hall of Famer **Mike Swain**. "Having the leading martial arts mat supplier in my corner paves the way for my success by providing me with the safest surfaces for daily training."

► **Thai supermodel** and *Scouts vs. Zombies* star

Sara Malakul Lane has signed to play the **love interest** of star **Alain Moussi** in the **Kickboxer** remake. She'll join **Jean-Claude Van Damme**, *Black Belt* Hall of Famer **Gina Carano**, **WWE** wrestler **Dave Bautista** and MMA star **Georges St-Pierre**.

► Those who wish to immerse themselves in the **Chinese martial arts** for **three years** are in luck. The **YMAA Retreat Center** in Northern California, run by *Black Belt* Hall of Famer **Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming**, is **accepting applications** until January 1, 2016. ymaa-retreatcenter.org

► After losing more than 8,000 "likes" when **Facebook** culled its inactive accounts, the **Black Belt** page has recovered. It currently

boasts more than **396,000 fans**. The magazine's **Twitter** page is nearing **12,000 followers**.

► The latest **UFC** match to feature the talents of *Black Belt* Hall of Famer **Ronda Rousey** lasted all of **14 seconds**. Her opponent — for a brief time — was **Cat Zingano**.

► Who's up for a **Brazilian jiu-jitsu cruise**? Called **Grappler's Escape: Rolling on the High Seas**, it's planned for **October 4-10, 2015**. grapplersescape.com

► If not **BJJ**, then how about a **kickboxing cruise**? Presented by **CKO Kickboxing** on August 22-27, 2015, it will offer "**five days of fun and fitness**" en route to **Bermuda**. fantastic7cruises.com/rw/view/4739 ✕

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Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Has a Rising Star Down Under

“Ladies and gentlemen, in this corner, the champion: organized Brazilian *jiu-jitsu* competition. This is an established culture whose inclusiveness has made it one of the more progressive contenders in the martial arts. Despite this, it remains dominated by male competitors and is usually taken seriously only when done by adults.

by Jason Brick

“**A**nd in this corner, the challenger to the status quo. This fighter is a BJJ competitor who’s just 11 years old. She’s a sponsored amateur who rolls on level ground with young male athletes and with women many years her senior. Fighting out of Australia: Harriet Slym.”

WHENEVER THE WORD “prodigy” is used, it creates big shoes that need to be filled, but how else do you describe a girl who, just three years after she first donned a *gi* and 10 months after she started competing, has managed 21 submission victories in 28 matches — against, for the most part, boys and older girls? What’s more impressive is that Harriet doesn’t even have the common courtesy to be arrogant about her success.

“I had a reputation in the family as a quitter,” she said about her life before jiu-jitsu, when her energies were channeled into gymnastics, ballet, dance and tennis. Her reason for changing course so often, she said, was those athletic pursuits didn’t hold her interest. All that ended when her dad, a BJJ brown belt, noting that Harriet was “the kind of girl who liked a daily wrestle anyway,” suggested she join a class he was teaching.

When she started training, Harriet was the only girl in a class of 15 kids. Nonetheless, she enjoyed every session, so much so that she stayed for two and a half years.

“Harriet is a fun-loving girl who doesn’t take life too seriously, but she has the strongest work ethic and the mindset of a champion,” her father Paul Slym said about his daughter’s devo-

tion to the grappling sport.

After noticing Harriet’s blossoming skills, Paul realized that she needed more robust training. His solution was to enroll her at Southside Mixed Martial Arts – Gold Coast, where she would train under first-degree BJJ black belt Vicente Cavalcanti. Both father and daughter expected it to bring out the best in the young grappler, and it did.

IN THE SIX MONTHS that followed, Harriet’s performance on the mat catapulted her to the No. 1 spot in the junior gi division of the Australian Federation of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. Because of that, her training and competition videos have become a hit online, with several tournament clips having received 100,000 views and her flying-armbar demo coming in at 1.5 million.

Harriet also has attracted attention from the martial arts business world, including a sponsorship from Combat Skin in the United States and Fight Life in Australia. Part of the reason for her popularity among corporate types is her approach to the requisite sponsor mentions on social media. A recent Facebook post from the tween grappler: "I remember not having teeth. I would really like to keep all of mine now. Thanks Fight Life for the Damage Control mouthpiece."

INSPIRED BY Harriet's sense of humor — and her attitude, in general — I wanted to learn more, so I peppered her with questions during our long-distance interview. Her answers to these three were my faves because they reveal the girl that lurks beneath the gi.

Black Belt: Many women of earlier generations found that their gender was an obstacle — or at least a challenge — to their efforts to be taken seriously as martial artists. Has this been true for you?

Harriet: No, not at all. I think because I am a girl in a male-dominated sport,

competing with boys, people who wouldn't normally follow grappling are taking an interest. There are boys with equal skill who get zero recognition for their ability.

Black Belt: What lessons have you learned from your losses?

Harriet: I lost due to strategy against older, more experienced boys. They had answers for my usual guard attacks, so rather than risk a referee decision, I took risks and threw everything at them in the last 30 seconds, giving up guard-passing points. Then there was no time to recover. The lesson learned was the matches are short, so attack early — just in case.

Black Belt: What do you think about your rising stardom?

Harriet: People seem to be enjoying sharing my jiu-jitsu journey, and that's great, but I'm just a normal 11-year-old girl who trains in martial arts.

WHAT'S NEXT for Harriet Slym? She said she wants to compete abroad, perhaps at the 2016 Pan Kids IBJJF Jiu-Jitsu Championship in California. "I want to test myself against girls of the

same age, rank and weight, which is something I have never experienced," she said.

Testing herself against more qualified jiu-jitsu competitors, however, isn't enough for this overachiever. She also plans to round out her combat skills, and to that end, she's started training in *muay Thai*. Her immediate goal in this new pursuit: competing in Australia's Junior MMA League — as soon as her parents think she's old enough. ✕

JUST THE FACTS

Name: Harriet Slym

Age: 11

Weight: 34 kg (75 lbs)

Favorite Submission: triangle choke

Gym: Southside Mixed Martial Arts — Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia

Main Instructor: Vicente Cavalcanti

Testimonial: "Harriet is a very dedicated, humble girl who trains very hard," Cavalcanti said. "She has an amazing talent because she believes in herself and does not lack in motivation. It is always a pleasure to see her smiling face on the mats."

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The plot of *The Martial Arts Kid* revolves around Don Wilson's efforts to teach traditional martial arts values and skills to a troubled teen.

The Dauntless Dragon

These days, America lags behind the rest of the world in kickboxing, but it wasn't always so.

by Mark Jacobs

Back in the 1970s and early '80s, with fighters like Bill Wallace and Benny Urquidez, America stood atop the kickboxing landscape. And no one stood taller than Don "The Dragon" Wilson.

While Wilson, 60, is now known primarily as an actor, he should be remembered as perhaps the greatest kickboxer of all time. He earned that reputation with victories in every form of the sport — from old-school PKA full-contact karate to pure *muay Thai* — against a host of champions that included kickboxing/MMA legend Maurice Smith and boxing/kickboxing titleholder James Warring. Despite all his success, Wilson never regarded himself as a kickboxer.

"Kickboxing is a sport — it's not martial arts, and it's not self-defense," he said. "I was never a kickboxer; I was a martial artist who did kickboxing to

improve my striking and my defense against strikes."

A HIGH-SCHOOL STANDOUT in basketball and football, Wilson used athletics as his equalizer while growing up in Florida in the 1960s, where he was the only person of Asian descent at his school.

"When you grow up looking totally different from everyone, it's a strange feeling," he said. "I can't say I consciously thought about it, but when I excelled in sports, it was payback for the taunts. And the acceptance you gain from your peers when you succeed is instantaneous."

Wilson became addicted to all sports, eventually playing football and wrestling at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. After his first year there, he received his initial exposure to the martial arts:

His older brother Jim, who'd studied *pai lum kung fu* for three years, invited him to put on the gloves for some friendly sparring.

When his smaller brother got the better of him, Wilson became a believer in the effectiveness of the arts. Upon returning to the Coast Guard Academy, he took up *goju-ryu* karate under *Black Belt Hall* of Famer Chuck Merriman. After graduation, he started training with his brother's instructor Daniel K. Pai, along with anyone else who could teach him something useful.

WILSON STARTED in point karate but quickly became attracted to a new sport called "full-contact karate." He fought his first match in 1974 on a concrete floor rather than in a ring, wearing light foam hand pads instead of boxing gloves. His first professional

Photo Courtesy of Don Wilson

bout netted him a grand total of \$100. The hospital bill for the broken hand he suffered cost him significantly more.

Nevertheless, he persisted — and became the Professional Karate Association's No. 1 contender for its vacant title. But instead of fighting for it, Wilson began competing for the rival World Karate Association, eventually winning his first major championship there.

"Being part Japanese, I wanted to fight in Japan," Wilson said about the next phase of his career. "But the PKA didn't allow leg kicks in its fights. To me, if you're going to be a world champion, you have to fight all over the world, and you're not going to fight in the Orient if you only fight above the waist."

While many of his PKA contemporaries shied away from international bouts that permitted leg kicks, Wilson never had trouble adjusting his fighting style. "I really believe it's a psychological thing for a lot of fighters," he said. "I played running back in football and took a lot of big hits to my legs, so I was prepared for the pain. But if you're not mentally prepared to deal with the pain of a leg kick, it can come as a shock."

WILSON EVENTUALLY "retired" from kickboxing — although he's staged numerous comebacks and even now is negotiating for a fight in Brazil. On the advice of Chuck Norris, he moved to Hollywood to pursue acting. Wilson followed Norris' game plan of taking acting lessons and being serious about his new career, rather than just trying to cash in on his reputation as a martial artist.

Wilson's efforts paid big dividends: He was cast by B-movie mogul Roger Corman to star in a low-budget film called *Bloodfist*. The movie was successful enough to spawn seven sequels.

Now a veteran of dozens of films, Wilson still keeps his hand in the fight game. He served as an announcer at several early UFC events — intriguingly, he says it was part of a scheme to build interest in a fight between himself and Royce Gracie. A few years back, Wilson also engaged in talks for a bout with then-UFC welterweight champ Matt Hughes. He said that although he was eager to get it on, the promotion wasn't willing to pay enough to make it happen.

While he never got a chance to compete in MMA, Wilson expressed a love for the sport, saying he always felt he was doing mixed martial arts even before that term was coined.

"I was a wrestler in college and have always believed in using everything when it comes to martial arts," he said. "I prefer MMA to kickboxing because you're still doing kickboxing but with the added element of grappling. I'm a fan of MMA, but you have to remember [that] it's still a sport, not a real fight."

Potential comebacks aside, Wilson does all his fighting on-screen nowadays — most recently in *The Martial Arts Kid*, a film co-produced by his brother Jim. His co-star is none other than Cynthia Rothrock.

Wilson's other passion is Traditionz, a clothing company he and his brother created. They wanted to pay tribute to the philosophies, values and traditions of the arts, something most clothing makers neglect to do, he said. "Remember, as modern as he was, Bruce Lee was also a philosopher. He didn't say to take all the philosophy of martial arts and just throw it out. It's important." ✕

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The Next Generation of Bokator Embraces MMA

In December 2011, a martial artist with the assumed name of Dara Bokator competed in Cambodia's first televised pro *bokator* match.

by Antonio Graceffo

Throwing flying knees and elbows, he demonstrated the incredible dexterity and agility for which his art is renowned. When he launched a high kick at his opponent and the man caught his leg, Dara jumped up and nailed him with a leg triangle. The fighters crashed to the ground, and Dara converted the hold into an inverted armbar.

The opponent managed to escape, but Dara wound up winning by TKO, mostly because of his use of boxing punches

and combinations. His boxing, like his wrestling, was new, and he obviously hadn't mastered those foreign skills yet. But his bout was proof that the art of bokator had, in essence, time-traveled hundreds of years into the future.

Fast-forward to the present: A young bokator master named Darith Ung is leading a group of fighters through their prayers, paying respect to the art's ancestors. Then they begin a traditional bokator training session, which includes hundreds of

controlled kicks that build incredible power and accuracy. After a water break, they practice a combination that starts with a bokator elbow to the head and transitions to a *muay Thai* clinch before they drop, roll and execute a neck submission.

THE FIGHT SPORTS are constantly evolving. As the world changes, the traditional martial arts often struggle to preserve their ancient character while trying to keep up. Bokator was in that boat — until a group of black belts in Cambodia decided their martial art needed a makeover.

In the old days, a master served as a filter through which his followers experienced the world. Students in Korea believed that *taekwondo* was the most lethal style because their master said so. Students at Shaolin Temple accepted that no fighter in the world could beat a Shaolin martial monk because that's what they were told. Until fairly recently, kids in Cambodia were constantly reminded that bokator was the best system on earth.

But in the last case, there was a slight problem. The main bokator school in Phnom Penh was located near the Olympic stadium, and the young practitioners knew they couldn't take down the wrestlers who trained there. Additionally, many bokator students had gained experience in Khmer kickboxing, and they knew that in a stand-up battle, they couldn't prevail.

That led many young Cambodians to question bokator's efficacy against other styles.

CONTRIBUTING TO the discontent was the Internet. In 2004, when the Bokator Federation was founded, it cost \$5 an hour to go online in Phnom Penh, and very few people spoke English or knew how to use a computer. The outside world remained outside.

Now, the city has free Wi-Fi in most bars and restaurants. Internet cafes charge about 25 cents an hour, meaning that even people at the bottom of the financial totem pole can afford to browse the Web — assuming they don't have 3G on their phones. Consequently, in 2004 the average Cambodian martial artist hadn't heard of the UFC, but today they know the names of all the top fighters.

Interest in MMA has grown quickly

in Cambodia. A series of pro bokator matches ran on television, with rules similar to MMA. The fights were held on a platform, rather than in a cage or ring, and athletes wore Khmer *krama* (scarves) wrapped around their waist and head. But they also sported MMA gloves. And even though there was a time limit on the ground, they could win by KO, choke or submission.

Fighters like Dara started supplementing their skills with boxing. Others trained with Cambodia's national wrestling team. The matches in which they took part ended up looking more and more like MMA but with a crazy Cambodian flavor. The team was using leaping leg-scissor chokes and insane combinations that might include a knee to the face followed by five or 10 elbow smashes that had one's entire bodyweight dropping onto the opponent's skull.

been doing precisely that while living in the new bokator academy. His enthusiasm for the future of the next generation of bokator is shared by everyone who trains under him.

UPDATE: A Cambodian TV network recently organized a MMA show at its studio to help determine if all the logistics were in place for the eventual broadcast of such events. One of the bokator fighters, after having trained with Chan for just a few weeks, placed second in his weight class. He prevailed in one of his fights using a move from MMA: the north-south choke. ✕

● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Antonio Graceffo is the first foreigner to be awarded a black krama in bokator. His book *Warrior Odyssey* is available at blackbeltmag.com.



They believe they can contribute more by taking on and defeating foreign fighters in international competitions, as opposed to just talking about how great their country's art is.

AS THIS GROUP of martial artists cross-trained, a rift developed between them and the bokator grandmaster. They eventually split and named Darith Ung, 29, as their new leader. With help from donors, they opened a new academy next to the Olympic stadium so they could work out with wrestlers and Khmer boxers.

The new bokator MMA group comprises a bunch of 20-somethings who speak English and know how to use the Internet. They're still patriotic Khmers, but they believe they can contribute more by taking on and defeating foreign fighters in international competitions, as opposed to just talking about how great their country's art is.

After word spread — because of my stories in *Black Belt* and videos uploaded to YouTube — martial artists around the world offered to fly here to teach the group modern MMA techniques. One man who made good on his promise was a 25-year-old paramedic from Brooklyn named Chan Reach. An excellent grappler with 13 MMA fights, he sold everything he owned, quit his job and moved to Phnom Penh to teach grappling. Since November 2012, he's





21st-Century Yojimbo

So you've watched one too many samurai movies and long to be a sword for hire so you can cut down your employer's enemies?

by Mark Jacobs

Well, the closest you can get to that job description nowadays is personal-protection specialist — aka bodyguard — but if you think it's all about using your martial arts skills to fight off hordes of ninja assassins, think again.

"Most of the time, if you're in a situation where something dangerous is happening, you've already messed up," Kelly McCann said.

A MEMBER OF the *Black Belt* Hall of Fame, McCann lives at the top of the food chain in personal protection. A former U.S. Marine Corps counterterrorism specialist, he runs Crucible (team-crucible.com), a private training center that also contracts out teams of security experts to guard high-risk targets around the world.

While he acknowledges that martial arts skills are vital for anyone working in the field, much more important are skills for avoiding those dangerous situations in the first place. They include surveillance, communications, route selection and threat assessment — things that have more to do with thinking than fighting.

But on any personal-protection job, there's always the potential for physical

danger, he added. And certain assignments may be more likely to involve altercations, particularly in the realm of celebrity protection, where adoring fans and aggressive paparazzi can pose unintentional dangers.

TOM MUZILA is one of the leading *sho-tokan* karate experts in America and a former member of the Special Forces. He's worked in personal protection for nearly 40 years, guarding everyone from Stevie Wonder to Bruce Willis. Muzila said that although many celebrities will walk around with an entourage of large, imposing thugs to fend off crowds, such human barriers aren't always ideal.

"You don't want to escalate situations; you want to defuse them," he said. "People are filming everything nowadays, so you have to think how your actions will look to a judge. You can't just hit someone who gets too close to your client."

Muzila (tommuzila.com/bodyguarding) believes that in such situations, using your voice to make people back off should be the first response. If a situation then becomes physical, using a wrist lock or quickly spinning someone out of the way so your client can get past is usually preferable to a reverse punch to the face.

Perhaps the least useful martial arts skill for bodyguard work is ground fighting, Muzila said. "What happens if you get tied up on the ground with one person? While you're down there, your client is vulnerable to someone else. You have to be able to take someone out quickly when it's necessary and get your client out of there."

ON THOSE RARE occasions when things do get out of hand, it's best to not be alone. In fact, McCann said the whole notion of the lone bodyguard fending off threats is a fallacy.

"You need at least three people," he said. "Someone has to go into the site in advance to see which entrance is best to use, and you need a driver who will get rid of the car and walk with the principal. [That will] leave you free to deal with any potential threat."

Muzila said that working with a team of protectors affords the person in command the ability to position the member with the most martial arts expertise closest to the VIP. The reason: It's best to have someone with unarmed-combat skills nearby in case an attacker with a knife or gun darts out of a crowd. In such cases, disarming skills obviously would be crucial.

"You have to be willing to attack the threat if you're doing personal protection," Muzila added. "Most people, if there's shooting, will just hit the deck and curl up. To do personal protection, you need a warrior mentality to just go right for the attacker."

Because it can be challenging to find that mentality and the other aforementioned skills in civilians, many personal-protection specialists come from a military or law-enforcement background, which means they've already received some of the training that's needed to do the job. Those who lack that kind of experience still can break into bodyguarding, but if they hope to be anything more than a wannabe, they'll need to learn those specialized skills. Fortunately, a number of schools offer such training.

EXECUTIVE SECURITY International, located in Colorado, is one of the oldest facilities. Founded in 1980 by Korean martial arts veteran Bob Duggan, it's sometimes called the "Harvard of bodyguarding."

Duggan said that while many bodyguarding courses run you through a

three-day seminar before presenting you with a diploma that says you're a certified protection specialist, ESI (esibodyguardschool.com) is different. It offers a variety of 28-day residency programs in which you learn a panoply of bodyguarding tools from shooting and tactical medicine to corporate crisis management and behavioral intelligence. Duggan believes this last skill — being able to pick up on behavioral cues from potential threats in a crowd — may be one of the most important abilities a protection specialist can develop.

"Yes, martial arts skills are important," he said. "But if you don't have the capacity to detect these discreet behavior cues that indicate a threat, you'll be reacting too late regardless of how good your fighting skills are."

Duggan said there's a big difference between protecting celebrities and working in corporate security. Celebs often want someone who looks imposing to scare off potential nuisance assaults, but CEOs want protection that's almost invisible. Female protection specialists can sometimes be more effective than males in this arena, where protecting a client who doesn't want

to be seen with bodyguards is more about observational skills than size or fighting ability.

ALTHOUGH FEMALE personal-protection specialists are more in demand than males — because there are so few of them — both sexes can find work, provided they own the proper skills and a solid resume. Pay for short-term assignments can range from \$500 to \$1,000 a day, depending on experience and the nature of the job, including how much risk is involved. Long-term pay often starts at \$40,000 to \$50,000 a year with the potential to eventually earn six figures, but such sums are usually reserved for bodyguards who can tolerate an unpredictable work schedule and lots of travel.

There is one other downside to being a bodyguard, and it's boredom. By now, the reason should be obvious: If you're doing your job correctly, most of the time nothing will happen. You'll be standing around all day, trying to remain alert. It follows that any aspiring bodyguard would benefit from becoming an expert at what Bruce Lee once called "the art of fighting without fighting." 🦋

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Japanese Armor: Old Meets New

It will be fascinating for you, if you have the opportunity, to visit one of the museums in the West that have suits of Japanese armor. That's because feudal Japan took a different approach to body armor than we find in Europe.

by Dave Lowry

To some degree, the samurai traded protection for mobility. Rather than using rigid, curved metal sections like the European knights did, the Japanese constructed their armor from an elaborately woven series of leather panels. Roughly half the size of a playing card, these flat plates were pierced, then

overlapped and laced together with silk to create shapes that conformed to the body of the wearer.

Few images are more romantic and evocative than that of the fully armored samurai, resplendent, often wearing a helmet decorated with fantastic horns or spikes, giant kite-like sheets protecting his arms, layered cuirasses wrapped

around his body. As with many appealing pictures taken from history, the reality of this one was very different.

FIRST, GETTING INTO such armor was complicated. Attendants had to tie the numerous knots to hold all the parts in place in a manner that allowed freedom of movement. Second, once the armor was donned, the samurai — especially on long campaigns — often lived in it. The *yoroi* got wet in the rain. The hundreds of tiny crevices in the *kozane*, or individual plates, attracted lice. One of my teachers owns an heirloom scroll that has a recipe for getting rid of these creatures.

I've worn armor on a few occasions. Even going through *kata* is a remarkable training experience. Movements you take for granted are awkward, even impossible, in a *yoroi*. You learn a lot wearing one. But the armor of the samurai teaches other lessons, as well.

For example, most extravagant Japanese armor was never meant to be worn in battle. When the shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu unified Japan in 1600, battlefield warfare effectively ended in Japan for more than two centuries. Armor became a way of displaying the owner's wealth, political importance or taste.

Many of the giant helmets and massive shoulder protections you see in museums never protected their wearers from mortal danger. They were worn in public processions during the latter centuries of the feudal period. A helmet decorated with enormous horns or a long crescent or festooned with hair that made it resemble a lion's mane — these would have been impressive, but it would have been impractical to fight or even move freely while wearing one.

IF THE MUSEUMS to which you have access don't have Japanese armor from different periods, you can see examples in books or online. Go far enough back in time and you'll see that the first sets, used during the 14th century, were massive. They were meant to be worn on horseback. Then, as battle shifted to infantry warfare (15th to 16th centuries), the *yoroi* achieved its practical peak. During the peaceful period that followed, we begin to see the extreme, expansive decoration — the grandiose styles that looked impressive but had no practical value.

It's always instructive to consider this question: What happens when a fighting

Many of the giant helmets and massive shoulder protections you see in museums never protected their wearers from mortal danger.

art no longer has a practical use? It might wither and die. Or it might, like Japanese armor, assume purely decorative attributes. The fancy, the showy and the exaggerated become dominant. If you've ever watched "modern kata" at a karate tournament, this should sound familiar. The lavish armor suits of the peaceful Edo period served their purpose: They impressed. Perhaps we can say the same of the flashy, acrobatic karate kata of today.

Just remember, however, that real warriors of the samurai era put their armor to a different use than flaunting their status. Look at the two varieties of armor, but don't confuse them.

IT IS INTERESTING, too, to consider the weakness of much of Japanese armor: the silk cords that bind the plates together. There are hundreds of these lacings. Silk is remarkably strong when

kept clean and dry, but when it gets wet and is exposed to sunlight, it begins to rot. Eventually, it degrades.

This is one reason armor, when not worn, was kept in boxes of paulownia wood: It repelled insects, acted as a dehumidifier and kept the silk away from sunlight. Armor that's been stored in such boxes for hundreds of years may have silk lacings that look new. On the other hand, yoroi on display in museums can see the silk turn to dust with a single touch.

SO WHAT DO YOU DO if you're fortunate enough to own one of these treasures? Do you lock it away in its box and keep it in great condition — and never look at it or enjoy its beauty? Or do you keep it out, on display, and allow it to eventually fall apart?

You might be interested to know that those who study classical Japanese mar-

tial arts have their own approach. In many cases, they'll wear the original armor until it begins to fail. Then they'll replace the silk with nylon. It doesn't seem very traditional, but nylon will hold up long after the original silk has failed.

Being a "traditionalist" doesn't mean wearing a suit of armor until it's broken and useless just because some of the original elements have degraded. It is, instead, a process. One implements the modern where it's necessary and useful. One preserves the old even when it means adopting the new. ✨

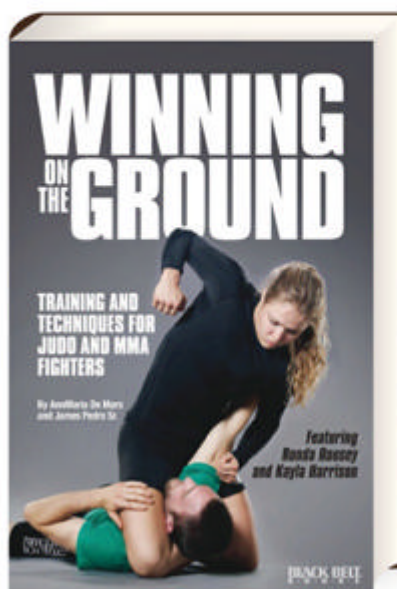
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Take a Punch

There's nothing fun about getting hit.

by Mike Gillette

When you're sparring, getting punched is frustrating, not to mention painful. On the street, getting punched can be far more devastating. The reason: Most street punches are thrown at unsuspecting targets. Have you seen any of the so-called "knock-out game" videos on YouTube? If so, you've witnessed just how dangerous it can be to fully absorb a punch to the head when you don't see it coming. The danger doesn't come just from being knocked out; once you're unconscious, even if it's brief, all kinds of really bad things can happen.

If you haven't seen any of those knockout-game video clips, you should view a few. They may be unpleasant,

but they're highly instructive. Once you see just how easily a person can be rendered helpless by a single punch, you'll develop an appreciation for the criticality of solid punch-defense tactics.

Because punching is the most common frame of reference people have for fighting, a lot of ideas and opinions get passed around about the best ways to deal with getting hit. Let's take a look at a couple of the most common ones.

TRAINING THE BODY TO WITHSTAND IMPACT: Impact training actually does work — to an extent. Anyone can learn to overcome the discomfort of getting hit. There's a limit to this, however, because dealing with physical pain is one thing, while experiencing a physical injury is quite another. A broken nose is still broken, even if you don't mind the pain.

Impact training can more accurately be described as progressive impact training. The term "progressive" is an

important one because it suggests that a person begins on one end of the impact spectrum and gradually increases the intensity of the blows received. This is not an exotic training method and should not be confused with some of the more esoteric practices associated with certain internal martial arts. Progressive impact training is simply using a deliberate process to allow your body to become more accustomed to rapidly occurring and uncomfortable stimuli — such as being punched.

Traditional boxing training provides a great example. Before the advent of warehouse gyms and high-tech "bounce-able" medicine balls, a medicine ball was encased in leather and rather hard. Trainers would throw them at or drop them onto a fighter's midsection, increasing the intensity over time. The objective was to desensitize the torso so the boxer could withstand shots to the body. It's a simple but effective approach.

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THE BEST OFFENSE IS A GOOD DEFENSE: A “good defense” isn’t any one thing; rather, it’s a combination of cultivated capabilities that come from training your mind, your movement and your muscle. These are capabilities that are not only physical but also psychological.

At the foundation level of any training regimen is the mental component. What does *training your mind* have to do with taking a punch? It’s simple: If you’ve never been punched, the first time you experience it can be overwhelming. This is because punches hurt — a lot. And a sudden, unexpected and painful stimulus is immediately disorienting. Whatever you were thinking about a few seconds prior to getting punched vanishes from your brain as you try to process what just happened. This is why sparring is such an important part of any martial arts or combat-

sports program. Getting punched in a controlled (and progressive) setting allows you to mentally inoculate yourself against the sudden shock that comes with getting hit.

Training your movement is about teaching yourself to maneuver efficiently and intentionally while defending against punches (or any kind of strikes) and being able to respond with appropriate counters. It includes evasive and aggressive footwork; blocking, covering and parrying a punch; and slipping, ducking, bobbing and weaving. Once again, structured sparring provides the ideal learning environment to develop these skills.

Training your muscle refers to building a strong body. The stronger your body is physically, the better able you are to withstand an externally applied force such as that generated by punches. A

stronger body is also a more stable body, and stability is necessary for launching powerful counterstrikes in response to a punch. A launch platform must be strong in order for it to be stable. When strength training is properly performed, your body can be transformed into a strong (yet mobile) platform.

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● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Mike Gillette is a former counterterrorism consultant for the DHS and TSA who now works as a tactical trainer and executive bodyguard. mikegillette.com.

The stronger your body is physically, the better able you are to withstand an externally applied force such as that generated by punches.



Mike Gillette (right) covers himself against a left hook while launching a counterstrike to his opponent Jake Swanson.

Photo Courtesy of Mike Gillette

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Now, on to the subject of the day: The problem with most exercises done to improve strength for any martial arts technique is it's nearly impossible to move through the actual range of motion associated with the technique. For instance, a plyometric push-up can boost explosive power for a punch, but it doesn't involve the same full-body recruitment as the punch. That's because the push-up doesn't account for what happens throughout your body when you propel your knuckles into a target. To get the full chain of events, you must actually punch. How can you do that while adding resistance? By strapping on weights, of course.

WEIGHT VEST: Considered a safe method for incorporating extra mass into a workout, it loads your legs and consequently taxes and strengthens your lower body. Because much of your striking power derives from the rotation of your midsection, a weight vest benefits you by forcing your muscles to rotate the mass of the vest in addition to the mass of your body.

It's important to note that deceleration — that is, stopping that rotation — is more challenging while wearing a weight vest because of the increased inertia. That will put your musculature under greater stress, especially if you're trying to reverse a motion rather than just stop it. This may sound bad, but it's actually good. Much of the benefit of resistance training results from the body dealing with the eccentric portion of an exercise. In this example, the eccentric portion is the "braking," or the stopping of the rotation. As long as you use an appropriately weighted vest and don't overdo it, you can increase your power output while keeping your joints and muscles healthy.

So how do you incorporate a weight vest into your training? Simply wear one while doing *kata*, drills, bag work and even sparring. The extra resistance will provide the necessary stimulus to augment your power output. To play it safe, limit the duration of your vested workouts to two or three sessions per week, with each one lasting 20 to 30 minutes.

ANKLE AND WRIST WEIGHTS: Although they're popular in the martial arts because they can be

There's More Than One Way to Lift Weights

by Ian Lauer, CSCS

Q: *In the last issue, you talked about lifting conventional weights for enhanced martial arts performance. What about other forms of weightlifting?*

A: There is another type of weight training that deserves discussion. It entails attaching extra weight to your body — specifically, your ankles, wrists or torso — and then engaging in functional martial arts training.

Before I begin, let me say this about "functional training." All too often, people use the term to refer to a hodgepodge of movements that in no way translate to improved functionality in their athletic endeavor. However, that doesn't mean the concept is without value. There are many simple and advanced exercises that really can result in improved martial arts. Some look similar to the movements they're meant to improve, while others are basic motions that enhance overall body function.

Rather than regard ankle and wrist weights as a way to increase power, think of them as a means to improve muscular endurance.

strapped on before executing kicks and punches, caution is advised if you're considering giving these products a try. Hyperextension of the elbows and knees can occur, especially if you attempt whipping arm movements (backfists, hand swords) or snapping or whipping leg movements (roundhouse kicks, front snap kicks).

Rather than regard ankle and wrist weights as a way to increase power, think of them as a means to improve muscular endurance. You can accomplish that by working through technique sequences at a moderate and safe speed for an extended time. The added weight will stress the involved musculature, causing it to become stronger and more resistant to fatigue.

It doesn't take much additional weight at the end of a long lever such as your arm or leg to dramatically increase the work that's done by the muscles at the

base of that lever. In other words, even though you use light weights and train well below your maximum speed, you can condition your shoulders and hips using ankle and wrist weights. That will result in improved muscular endurance for punching and kicking. It's worth mentioning again: Don't attach weights to your wrists and ankles and try to move your limbs at high velocity. It's a recipe for disaster.

Exception: You can decrease the risk of hyperextension by using a heavy bag to stop your weighted kicks and punches. If you decide to use this method, you'll find that soft weights are more comfortable.

KEY POINTS FOR WEIGHT TRAINING:

First, use a weight that's light enough. It should allow you to work through your standard range of motion for a given technique.

Second, pay attention to the technique. The entire chain of movement from the ground up should be done with precision.

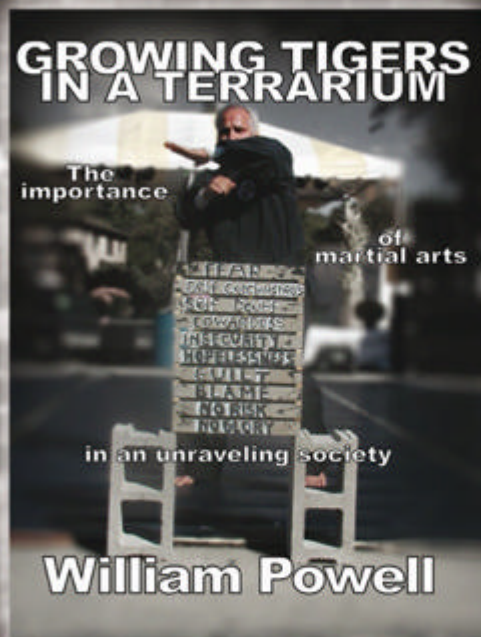
Third, start slowly. Increase your speed only after you've become comfortable with the added resistance.

Fourth, attach the weight(s) firmly to your body. You don't want the added mass to shift while you're exercising, and you really don't want anything to fly off and possibly injure someone.

Final caution: If you're overweight, adding weight during exercise can exacerbate joint problems and lead to other injuries. In such cases, use of a weight vest, ankle weights or wrist weights is not recommended. ✖

● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** *Ian Lauer is a certified strength-and-conditioning specialist and a kenpo black belt. For more information, visit ianlauer.com.*

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A black and white photograph of a person's hand gripping a chain-link fence. The hand is positioned on the right side of the frame, with fingers wrapped around the metal mesh. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the texture of the fence and the grip of the hand.

M M A AS A MARTIAL ART

by Robert W. Young / Photography by Ian Spanier

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B

ack in the early days of the UFC, the majority of traditional martial artists enjoyed this new form of combat, which was known as no-holds-barred fighting. Styles were matched against other styles, practitioners strode into the octagon wearing uniforms and gear that linked them to their arts, and bouts of trash talking were few and far between.

As the years passed and the purses grew, the fight sport, now called mixed martial arts, attracted a few athletes who exhibited bad behavior at live events and in real life. I say “a few” because after having interacted with numerous male and female fighters over the years during interviews and photo shoots, I can assure you that most mixed martial artists are as honorable as any traditional martial artist. Nevertheless, the sport got a bad rap because of the actions of the aforementioned few — some of whom have occasionally aimed disrespectful comments at the traditional arts.

Nowadays, you can’t broach the subject of MMA around traditionalists without being bombarded with negativity, especially “MMA doesn’t develop any of the good qualities the martial arts are known for!” and “That stuff won’t work on the street anyway!” Such sentiments are why I jumped at the chance to go one-on-one with Greg Jackson, one of the most accomplished coaches in the sport.

Jackson, you see, is a staunch believer in the notion that taught right, MMA can be every bit as valuable as any 1,000-year-old Asian art. In fact, he’s poured considerable time and effort into developing a curriculum that teaches MMA as a martial art, one which builds character while fostering fitness and, of course, self-defense ability.

UPBRINGING

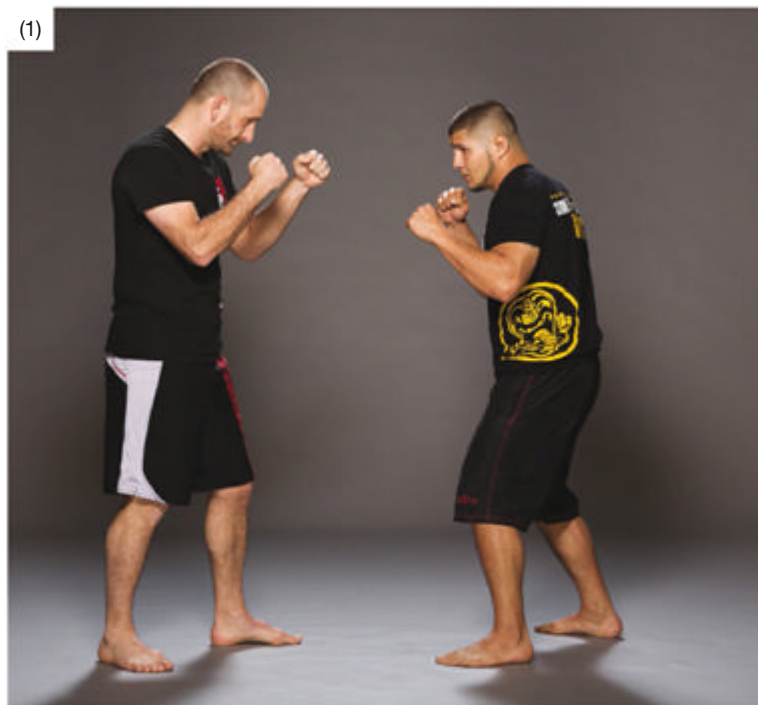
The story of Greg Jackson’s introduction to martial arts is a familiar refrain: He grew up in a rough section of town — in his case, Albuquerque — and was forced to learn self-defense for survival. “New Mexico is a poor state, and I was raised in a poor part of that poor state,” he says. “Because of the machismo that was prevalent in the culture, there was an immediate need for me to learn to defend myself. No one cared if you could play soccer or tennis; the only thing that was respected was if you could fight, so I figured I’d better learn how to do that.”

When it came to fighting, the youth discovered he had an excellent source of guidance very close to home. “I found that I came from a long line of wrestlers,” Jackson says. “My grandfather and uncles all wrestled. My father was a state champion in Illinois. My little brother was a state champion in New Mexico.”

Naturally, he was groomed in the grappling ways of his clan, but that didn’t quench his thirst for knowledge. “I started searching for martial arts that could help me on a personal level with my need for self-respect,” he

GREG JACKSON IS A STAUNCH BELIEVER IN THE NOTION THAT TAUGHT RIGHT, MMA CAN BE EVERY BIT AS VALUABLE AS ANY 1,000-YEAR-OLD ASIAN ART.

(1)



says. “I didn’t start martial arts because I watched a Bruce Lee movie or because I saw something cool. I actually needed it day in and day out. My journey started out of necessity, and that colored my entire martial arts career.

“I bounced around, looking for something that was very effective, but I kept going back to wrestling because that’s what I did as a kid. Sometimes when I would try to use a lock on a boxer in a fight, he would keep beating me with the other hand. I wasn’t as effective as I would have liked. That led me to figure out, in a rudimentary way, my own mixed martial arts. From that, I started doing things that a lot of other people weren’t doing: mixing wrestling, boxing and kickboxing. Then in 1993, the UFC came out, and I saw the Gracies. It was like I was in kindergarten and they were Ph.D.s.”

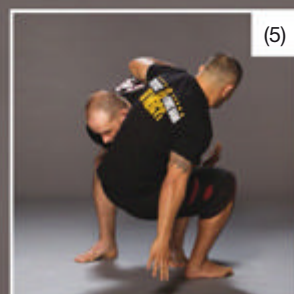
SELF-DEFENSE

After high school, Jackson went from teaching lessons to a bunch of friends to running his own martial arts school. Many of his students were into competing at local events that mixed bare-knuckle karate with grappling. “The guys I was training tried to talk me into doing it, too,” Jackson says. “I was more of a martial artist, a self-

defense guy. I wasn’t really into any of that stuff, but we went — and we won.

“That started my mixed-martial arts coaching journey. I never wanted to be a coach, but I figured I’d do it and then get back to martial arts. But we kept on winning, and more people started coming [to my school]. Twenty-two

SINGLE-LEG TAKEDOWN: Greg Jackson (left) faces UFC fighter Joe Stevenson (1). Jackson fires a front kick into Stevenson's groin (2), then closes the gap and reaches around his lead leg (3). Jackson lifts the trapped leg (4) and spins the man clockwise during the takedown (5). After getting the mount (6), Jackson can punch (7). However, he advises caution because a missed punch on the street can result in knuckles meeting concrete, and that often leads to broken bones.



(7)



years later, here I am, doing it for a living on the biggest stage in the world.”

Despite his success coaching the biggest names for the biggest stage — including Jon Jones, Georges St-Pierre, Rashad Evans, Shane Carwin, Nate Marquardt and Keith Jardine — Jackson insists his main interest in the martial arts is self-defense. “I’m not a cage fighter, and I’m not in mixed-martial arts competitions to fight,” he says. “For me, martial arts is a personal journey — for self-improvement, self-defense, a better understanding of the world and an understanding of how to handle myself in any situation. Mixed martial arts is the sporting aspect of what I do, but I’m first and foremost a martial artist.”

Considering that, it’s not surprising that Jackson would envision a program that combined MMA techniques, which he taught for a living, with self-defense, which drove his quest for self-knowledge. In fact, he spent years crafting such a program, and he and his people now teach it through Jackson’s MMA Association.

MMA detractors will immediately counter that the cage sport has nothing to do with self-defense, but Jackson disagrees. Vehemently. “One of the objections that come up is that mixed martial arts is just a sport and won’t work in real life,” he says. “But our program has been used by law enforcement, the Special Forces and so on. That’s verification that MMA techniques can work for self-defense.”

What makes Jackson’s system so valuable to the military and police is its success rate in the real world. It stems from the fact that the program’s techniques have been proved and perfected in the cage, he says. “One of the big advantages that mixed martial arts brings to the table is empirical feedback — you can watch a video of something work over and over. For self-defense, that’s hard to do because we don’t have videos of many scenarios.

“We’ve found that if you use the sporting aspect of mixed martial arts as a base, you can add things to it for very effective self-defense. For instance, the two most common reasons MMA matches get stopped are eye gouging and getting kicked in the groin, so we know those techniques are effective. If your entire martial arts system is built around kicking someone in the groin and poking him in the eye and one of those techniques works in a fight, that’s fine. But if it fails or if you can’t get to one of them, what else are you going to do?”

Jackson’s solution entails mating self-defense needs with a handful of MMA techniques and continually fine-tuning the result. “We get feedback from police officers — especially in a place like Albuquerque, where they have to go hands-on a lot,” he says.

When cops report on what worked and what didn’t work, Jackson listens. He considers all those after-action reports when deciding what gets added to or deleted from his program.

(1)



TECHNIQUES

It should be obvious that much of what’s used in MMA fights has self-defense applications — like kicking, punching, throwing and choking, Jackson says. It should be equally obvious that some octagon action has no place on the street.

“Mixed martial arts for competition and mixed martial arts as a form of self-defense are two different problems, but you use a lot of the same techniques,” he says. “Mixed martial arts for sport is an intense one-on-one situation in a static environment — there are no chairs, no tables, no running from room to room, no changes — but it’s very intricate in the one-on-one. What that means is if you’re in a deep half-guard and you’re trying to sweep and your opponent counters you, it’s a complicated back and forth.

“A self-defense situation is much bigger. You have to observe the room constantly because there might be more than one person. You have different environmental concerns to address: Where’s the furniture? How can I get to an exit? However, it’s usually not as intricate as competition.

Usually, you’re not going to try to pull a deep half-guard in a street fight because your opponent’s friend will kick you in the head. Knowing which techniques are appropriate for which situation is very important. There are a lot of MMA techniques we don’t do. For example, we hardly ever do the deep half-guard because it’s pretty useless on the street.”

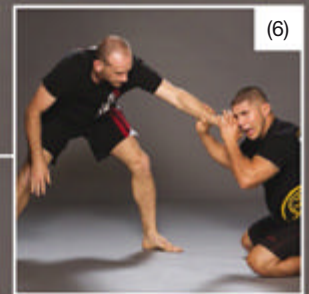
The opposite is also true, he says. “There’s a lot of things you can’t do in competition that we do. For example, you’re not allowed to strike to the back of the head in MMA, but we teach that hitting there is an easy way to knock someone loopy. The rules of MMA are thrown out in self-defense training.”

Throughout his teaching, Jackson always emphasizes that the “mixed” in mixed martial arts

WHITE TO YELLOW IN MMA

Want to test for yellow belt in Greg Jackson’s MMA program? Among the things you’ll need to demonstrate proficiency in are the following:

- **STAND-UP MOBILITY** (forward, backward, side to side)
- **GROUND MOBILITY** (front and back shoulder roll, shrimping)
- **STRIKING** (jab, cross, combination)
- **KICKING** (lead-leg front kick, rear-leg front kick)
- **TAKEDOWNS** (single-leg)
- **EXTENDED GROUND MOBILITY** (sprawling)
- **GROUND POSITIONS** (mount, guard, side mount, rear mount)
- **GROUND MOBILITY AND GROUND POSITIONS** (including strike defense)
- **PLUS CLINCH WORK, GUARD PASSING, RANDORI AND FITNESS**



(7)



GET-UP: To simulate being on the receiving end of a tackle, Greg Jackson starts on his back with his opponent in his guard (1). Jackson unlocks his ankles and begins to shift his body for a sweep (2). He effects an eye gouge with his left thumb (3) and uses that arm to push himself away from the opponent (4). Jackson scrambles to his feet without taking his eyes off the threat (5-6), then disengages and moves to a safe distance (7).

implies that MMA borrows from other sources that have been proved effective in self-defense. "When you're on your feet, you're doing kickboxing," he says. "When you're on the ground, you're doing wrestling or *jiu-jitsu*. In between, you might be doing ground and pound. None of this is new. I always like to give respect to the martial arts from which we mixed martial artists have pulled our techniques. For example, we still use a belt system. Even if we wear shorts and a T-shirt, it's an anchor to the traditional world. It tells people that this is where we came from."

INTANGIBLES

If MMA is the ultimate with respect to showcasing proven techniques, why are there hundreds of thousands of people tuning in each week to watch the cable and pay-per-view events but so few signing up for lessons? And why do the traditional arts, which aren't represented regularly on television, attract millions to *dojo* around the world?

"There's a difference, at the moment, between traditional martial arts and its culture and mixed martial arts and that culture," Jackson says. "In mixed martial arts, it's all based on what works and what doesn't work. There's no need for the rest of the gifts that martial arts give you. It's 'Can you do this armbar? Can you do these strikes? This works. This doesn't work.' And it's very exciting to have two people fight in a cage so everyone can see the techniques working."

"But when people watch that, it can be intimidating: 'They're fighting in a cage, and it looks really dangerous!' A prospective student or a parent might be thinking, 'I'm not sure I want to jump in there and have someone bash my face in — that does not look like fun.' There's an element of truth to that because obviously MMA is a sport that deals with violence."

"On the other hand, traditional martial arts is extremely popular, and that's because it's controlled. Because traditional martial arts is very old, things are organized to build up students in a way that doesn't just throw them into the shark tank and let the sharks bite."

Furthermore, the traditional arts teach all those intangibles that are so important to society — things like respect, humility and the appropriate use of violence, Jackson adds. "I feel that as mixed martial artists, we have walked away from that, and we need to get back to it. We need to understand that traditional martial arts has a lot to teach us. For mixed martial arts to survive, it has to be socially viable. It has to contribute something. You can't just give somebody a dangerous weapon and not teach them that using this weapon comes at a cost. You have to teach discipline. You have to teach that it's a last resort."

If you combine MMA techniques with traditional martial arts wisdom, you have the best of both worlds, Jackson says. "It will give you all the things that only martial arts can give while also giving you physical power and improving your health."

To spread his system, he created a licensing program through Jackson's MMA Association. "We don't tell you how to run your school," he says. "If you have a great *taekwondo* program, this can be just another stand-alone program you offer. We don't want to take over the world. We want to help people benefit from martial arts training."

One of the primary benefits his program pushes is

(1)



physical fitness. "Fitness is a big part of your life — not just the martial arts," he says. "Being fit and healthy should be a gift everyone gives themselves. You feel so much better about the world when you're fit and healthy." To that end, promotion in his program requires progress on the fitness front.

There are two other important benefits to learning his curriculum, he says. "Using the environment is a big one. For example, we teach get-ups using the cage, which can have big implications for self-defense. Another one is tactical thinking. Are you going to attack directly? Are you going to use fakes and feints? It's important to think about how and why you do things."

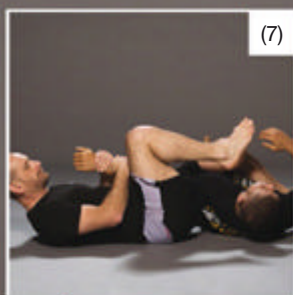
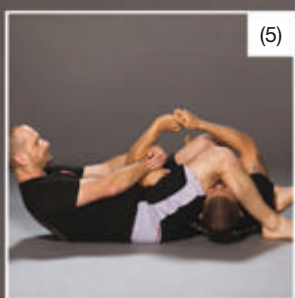
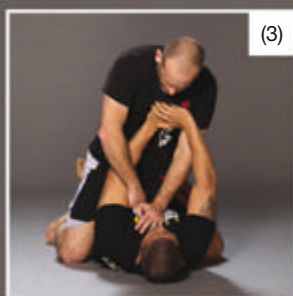
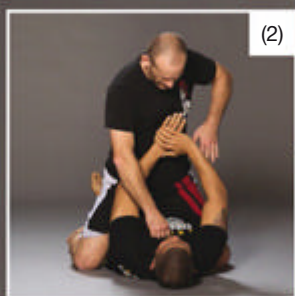
PREDICTIONS

Is MMA as a martial art going to supplant the traditional arts? It would seem unlikely. Jackson himself says he's not out to take over the world, and way too many traditionalists are perfectly happy doing what they're doing. Furthermore, way too many parents are more into safety and discipline, which they may never think their kids could get from an MMA program.

If Greg Jackson succeeds in spreading his system, however, it will be a good thing. I say that because I believe the group that's most receptive to his message is the MMA fan base. Jackson's program can bring many of the benefits of the traditional arts — discipline, respect, restraint and so on — to this group, which loves MMA but would never consider studying karate, kung fu or taekwondo. And when more people in a society can call themselves martial artists, society as a whole reaps the rewards. ✖

For more information, visit jacksonsmmaassociation.com.

ARMBAR: If a self-defense situation permits the safe use of ground grappling — which means no other potential opponents are present — the armbar can be used, but it should be modified. To illustrate, Greg Jackson mounts Joe Stevenson (1). Jackson fakes a punch (2) and immediately positions his hands for an armbar (3). He rotates his body around the pivot point and attempts the lock (4), but Stevenson resists by locking his hands (5). Next, Stevenson tries to bite Jackson's calf to break the hold (6). Before he can sink his teeth in, Jackson lifts his leg (7) and repositions it with his foot on Stevenson's jaw (8). The technique will be even more effective with shoes on.



(8)



MMA LESSONS LEARNED

One of the key technical elements MMA can teach traditional martial artists is how to disengage from an opponent, which can be crucial if you ever find yourself fighting two or three attackers, Greg Jackson says. "The get-ups we do in MMA are not that different from the get-ups you do on the street after someone has tackled you."

The crucial points include how to get your hips free, how to stand, how to remain ready to fend off a follow-up attack — all of which can be learned from studying what happens in the cage, he says.

Another key element involves technique augmentation. Start with the jab, which you can learn in boxing, kickboxing or MMA. Develop your skills in sparring. Now add the eye gouge and practice on a soft, anatomical target like the Century BOB. Keep your skills sharp by drilling your jab — minus the eye gouge, of course — with a training partner.

"You can't spar with eye gouging — that would be a very short sparring session — but you can spar with jabs, and there's little difference between them really," Jackson says. You can take many other MMA techniques and tweak the details to make them more viable for self-defense, he adds.





The Green Legend

Crouching Tiger,
Hidden Dragon 2

ONE OF THE GREATEST MARTIAL ARTS MOVIES OF ALL TIME IS GETTING A SEQUEL,
AND MARCO POLO'S JOHN FUSCO WROTE THE SCREENPLAY! BY CHRIS SAUNDERS



Crouching Tiger continued the tradition laid down by those great Bruce Lee action flicks of the early 1970s, a tradition that was picked up and contemporized by the likes of Jackie Chan and Jet Li.



Michelle Yeoh, shown in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (here), will reprise her role in the sequel (previous pages).



Yuen Woo-ping will direct the sequel.

A

surprise hit of 2000 — even of the last decade — was *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Made on a modest budget of \$17 million, the Ang Lee-directed epic grossed more than \$213 million, making it the most successful foreign-language movie in American history. Along the way, it won four Academy Awards and two Golden Globes. It currently boasts a score of 97 percent on the meta-review website Rotten Tomatoes based on more than 420,000 ratings — which, as we all know, is the true measure of success.

Perhaps more significantly, *Crouching Tiger* continued the tradition laid down by those great Bruce Lee action flicks of the early 1970s, a tradition that was picked up and contemporized by the likes of Jackie Chan and Jet Li. In other words, it took elements of the traditional Chinese martial arts and made them palatable to the public.

Because of its unparalleled success, a sequel has been commissioned. Titled *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: The Green Legend*, it's scheduled for an August 28, 2015, simultaneous release in IMAX movie theaters and on Netflix — the first time this has been attempted. It's a brave move, designed to eradicate the traditional three- to four-month window between the time a movie is shown in cinemas and the time it transitions to the small screen. (Industry insiders regard this as a pre-emptive strike against illegal streaming and Internet piracy.)

What We Know

The cast of *Green Legend* is star-studded, to say the least. The biggest names belong to Michelle Yeoh, who plays the same character she did in the first film; Donnie Yen, whose best-known works include the

Ip Man movies; and Jason Scott Lee, who portrayed the title character in *Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story*. Chow Yun-fat, Zhang Ziyi and Cheng Pei-pei are among the notables who are not reprising their roles from the first film — in some cases, for obvious reasons.

Green Legend is based on *Iron Knight, Silver Vase*, the fifth volume of the *Crane-Iron* book series by Chinese writer Wang Bao Xiang (1909-77), better-known by his pseudonym Wang Dulu. Confusingly, the first *Crouching Tiger* movie was based on book four of the series, leaving the door open for a possible prequel — or three. At present, no English translation of the book series exists, although Yeoh offers extensive translated summaries of all the books on her website MichelleYeoh.info.

Netflix representatives describe *Green Legend* as a work that echoes the themes of the original while telling its own story, one containing “breathtaking action in an epic martial arts battle between good and evil that will decide the fate of the martial world.”

Filmed in New Zealand and China, the sequel is another collaboration between John Fusco, The Weinstein Co. and Netflix, who worked together to great effect on the groundbreaking series *Marco Polo* (see sidebar). In Ang Lee's absence, *Green Legend* is directed by Yuen Woo-ping, who served as fight choreographer for the first movie.

Despite having attained almost mythical status in the industry through his contributions to the *Matrix* trilogy, *Kill Bill: Vol. 1* and *Vol. 2*, and *Lethal Weapon 4*, Yuen insists the first *Crouching Tiger* film includes some of his finest work to date. He's even named the famous climactic scene between Yeoh and Zhang as his all-time favorite film fight.

Enter the American

For *Green Legend*, Yuen will use a screenplay from Connecticut-born Fusco. Yuen and Fusco are longtime associates — most notably, the dynamic duo worked together on the 2008 Jackie Chan and Jet Li vehicle *The Forbidden Kingdom*. Fusco, who first shot to fame as the writer of *Young Guns* and *Young Guns II*, has trained in the martial arts since he was 12.

"I started in *tang soo do* back in Waterbury, Connecticut, in the early '70s under Romaine Staples," Fusco says. "Eventually, I found my way into Northern Shaolin kung fu and have been studying northern mantis for 16 years. I've also studied some *pa kua* and *wing chun*."

Despite having a schedule that would leave most mortals with precious little training time — he was about to fly to China when *Black Belt* corralled him for this interview — Fusco always manages to squeeze in martial arts workouts.

"Training keeps me grounded and ready for any situation, not just physically but mentally," he says. "Even if I have to get up at 3 a.m. to do my workout, I will. If you start to let things slip, you soon lose it. I train a two-and-a-half-hour program. I start with some *jeet kune do* — Burton Richardson in Hawaii has been helpful with this — because it's so good for cardio. It gets the muscles firing. Then I go on to my Shaolin forms, a few drills, some bag work, and maybe a little strength and conditioning. I'm also a big believer in HIIT (high-intensity interval training), and when the weather is right, I like to get out and do hill sprints."

In addition to the physical, Fusco is a big fan of the philosophical and spiritual components of kung fu. Unfortunately, during China's Cultural Revolution, those teachings were removed from many — but not all — interpretations of the art.

"There are still these pockets of traditional practitioners run by the old masters — strangely enough, most of them are based outside China," Fusco says. "My

sifu is in northern Vermont in the States, and he is originally out of Boston's Chinatown. A lot of the people who left China are keeping up the tradition of kung fu in a more purist way than what you would find in modern China.

"Yuen Woo-ping once saw me doing praying mantis in his training *dojo*. He asked where I'd learned this old kung fu because so few people even do that in China anymore.

"I've learned so much from Woo-ping, and it's great to be working with him again on *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: The Green Legend*. It's such an honor to go down to his *dojo* and watch him choreograph a fight scene."

Internalizing Success

It's been suggested that one of the factors behind the popularity of the original *Crouching Tiger* was its emphasis on the internal martial arts. Recall the scene in which Yeoh's character Yu Shu Lien says to her young adversary, "You have been trained at Wudang."

For those not in the know, the internal arts are based on traditional Taoist teachings, particularly those that come from Wudang mountain in southern China. Presumably, *Green Legend* also will emphasize this fascinating subset of the Chinese arts, which will make it that much more interesting to audiences who are used to Hong Kong and American films that focus on the dynamic movements and flashy techniques of the external arts.

Even if it follows that formula, whether the second *Crouching Tiger* movie can replicate the financial success and lasting influence of the first film remains to be seen. But whatever the outcome, *Green Legend* — with the proven talent of Yuen Woo-ping, John Fusco, Michelle Yeoh, Donnie Yen and Jason Scott Lee solidly behind it — is certain to be one of the cinematic events of the decade.

● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Chris Saunders is a freelance writer and novelist based in the United Kingdom.





BLACK BELT EXCLUSIVE

Q&A WITH JOHN FUSCO

Are you the person who elected to have the martial arts play a prominent role in the Netflix original series *Marco Polo*?

Yes. It was a part of the vision for the show from the first moment of inspiration. Young Marco Polo was given a scholar-warrior education in the empire of Kublai Khan, an empire that was absorbing the arts and ideas of 13th-century China. So it made great sense to me and felt organic to the idea — never a gratuitous action infusion.

While doing research for the show, did you or your staff uncover any evidence that Polo actually did martial arts?

Having studied Marco Polo for many years, I was always fascinated by his writings about his education under the Khan — how he was trained in archery, horsemanship, languages and letters. He had many esteemed tutors and masters who had been conscripted into the Khan's kingdom. It was a community with many Buddhist and Taoist monks.

It's not out of the realm of possibility that Marco Polo studied Chinese combat arts. [He] had a great thirst for learning and a true love for the treasures of China. One of the items he brought back with him to Venice after 17 years was Buddhist prayer beads. He was also fascinated by the internal powers of Taoist monks. Still in his 20s, Marco idolized Alexander the Great, so we know he had an adventurer's soul. I do believe he would have been very interested in learning Chinese warrior skills.

How much of the martial arts action and philosophy in *Marco Polo* comes from your experience in the arts?
Well, all the philosophy certainly does. [The character]

Hundred Eyes is based on many different *sifu* I've had the honor to learn from. And a good percentage of the kung fu action comes off the pages I wrote. I ascribed a style to every character who fights. For instance, my main style is mantis kung fu, so I worked that into the character Jia Sidao, building on the historical fact that he was obsessed with cricket fighting. I also wrote in the eight-trigram boxing style that Collin Chou does in Hour 7 [of the series], the *tai chi* sword dance in the "Concubine Suicide" [episode] and so on. *Marco Polo* has given me the opportunity to fill it with all my martial arts passion and, hopefully, in an authentic way.

How often do you get to train when you're at home and when you're on the road?

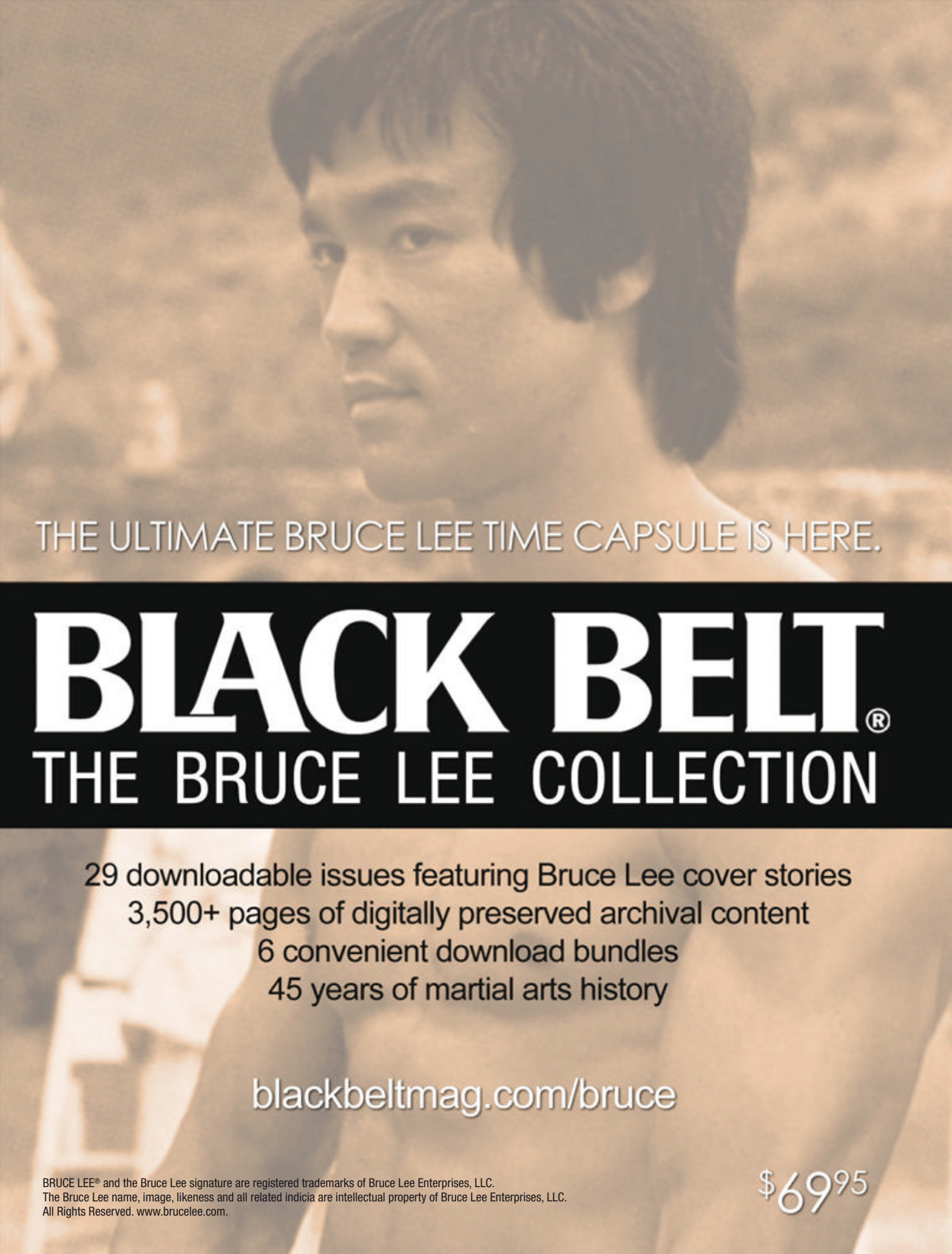
I train all the time — every day at home. On the road, I get with our stunt master Brett Chan and his team and do conditioning with those guys. Once production — especially TV production — gets going heavy, it can be difficult to train when you're up at 5 and going into the night. But I'm obsessive about keeping the training sharp. It keeps me sane in this crazy business.

Can fans expect to see lots of martial arts in the second season of *Marco Polo*?

You bet. This season will feature a lot more Mongolian wrestling, an unsung and highly effective martial art.

When will the new season be released by Netflix?

At this point, that is a Netflix question. But I can tell you that we're in prep right now, exciting scripts are being written, and we're fired up to get the new season out there as soon as possible. ✕



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2 DOWN-AND-DIRTY

KENPO DEFENSES AGAINST A STRAIGHT RIGHT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT REIFF

ABOUT THE DEFENDER

NAME: Orned Gabriel
BETTER KNOWN AS: "Chicken" Gabriel
RANK: 10th-degree black belt
BASE: San Diego, California
PRIMARY ART: Chinese kenpo karate
RESUME: instructor, former competitor, former champion
LEGACY: founder of the United Karate Federation
BEST-KNOWN STUDENT: Steve "Nasty" Anderson

ABOUT THE ATTACKER

NAME: Steve Anderson
BETTER KNOWN AS: "Nasty" Anderson
RANK: "I have no rank," he says. "People have tried to give me sixth- and seventh-degree black belts, but I've never cared, never worried about it."
BASE: Ottawa, Canada
PRIMARY ARTS: North American freestyle karate
RESUME: instructor, former competitor, former champion
LEGACY: four-time WAKO World Championships winner, member of the Black Belt Hall of Fame
BEST-KNOWN INSTRUCTOR: Orned Gabriel





1



2



3



4



5



10



9



8



7



6

GROIN STRIKE

Orned Gabriel (right) faces Steve Anderson (1). Anderson opens with a right punch, which causes Gabriel to sidestep the attack while parrying the arm (2). Gabriel uncorks a right hand to the groin (3), then grabs his opponent's right leg and off-balances him (4). Gabriel effects the takedown (5) and strikes the inside of the opponent's legs (6-8) before finishing with a groin shot (9-10).



9



10



1



2



8



3

ELBOW STRIKE

Steve Anderson (left) confronts Orned Gabriel (1). Anderson launches a right punch, and Gabriel responds by stepping to the outside and, for insurance, parrying the limb (2). Gabriel moves farther to the outside (3) and sends an open-hand strike into Anderson's ribs (4). He follows up with a finger flick to the eyes (5) and a backfist to the temple (6-7). A collar grab is followed by a kick to the knee (8). Gabriel finishes with a right elbow strike to the head (9-10).



7



6



5



4

CALIFORNIA BLITZ VS. MMA SUPERMAN PUNCH

Go to blackbeltmag.com to read an exclusive interview with sport-karate legend Steve "Nasty" Anderson. Subject du jour: how his trademark sparring technique from the 1970s compares to the modern MMA punch made famous by the likes of Georges St-Pierre.



15

ALARI

16

AYATTU

WHAT EVERY MODERN MARTIAL ARTIST NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT THE ANCIENT INDIAN FIGHTING SYSTEM

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY KHURSHED DINSHAW



WHAT IT IS: *Kalari payattu* is one of the oldest fighting arts in the world. The name comes from two words: *kalari*, which means “gymnasium,” and *payattu*, which means “exercise” in Malayalam, the language of the Kerala state in India. It’s believed that karate and kung fu took inspiration from *kalari payattu* (also spelled *kalari payit*) in their formative years.

WHEN IT WAS CREATED: The origin of the *kalari* — and hence the fighting style — can be traced back to the 12th century, when a breakdown of the Kerala state occurred. That led to the emergence of small kingdoms, many of which were unable to pay for their own armies. In response, chieftains would maintain *kalari* in a bid to keep their citizens ready to wage war. Good physical training and discipline were cultivated in case of attack.

BECOMING A MARTIAL ART: *Kalari payattu* evolved into a system that was eventually taught to people from all castes and religions, which resulted in Hindus, Muslims and Christians practicing alongside one another. It grew to include techniques for fending off attacks by both armed and unarmed enemies. *Kalari payattu* masters, or *gurukkal*, were selected for their character and discipline. Reflecting the way such traits were emphasized, obedience to one’s master was deemed crucial, and students were required to obtain their master’s permission before using weapons.

MAIN VARIATIONS: *Kalari payattu* can be divided into northern and southern styles. The northern version focuses on body-control exercises, while the southern version emphasizes empty-hand fighting. Usage of sticks and other weapons, as well



as the ways of healing, can be found in both styles. Interestingly, the healing portion of the curriculum encompasses treatment for most of the injuries one might sustain in kalari payattu training and fighting.

AYURVEDIC CONNECTION:

The Western Ghats region of India is known for its therapeutic herbs, many of which are used to make medicines to treat kalari payattu injuries, as well as to enhance massage designed to care for bones, muscles, nerves and vital points. When kalari payattu practitioners receive massages, they take full advantage of the experience to see how each muscle and nerve responds to pressure from the fingers and feet.

BREATHING AND SEEING:

Because oxygen intake

is crucial when exerting oneself in kalari payattu, a treatment known as *nasyam* is often administered to promote clear nasal passages. It entails dripping a concoction of herbal juices and medicated oils into the nose. Because vision is also essential, a treatment called *tharpanam* is used to strengthen the nerves of the eye and prevent swelling and itching.

TRAINING FACILITIES:

Kalari are categorized according to floor size. The standard lengths are 52 feet, 42 feet, 32 feet, 18 feet and 12 feet. The width is normally half the length. A facility's height may vary from 12 to 30 feet. In the past, kalari structures were covered with coconut leaves, but nowadays tiles and concrete are used. One factor that hasn't changed: The door always faces east.

GATEKEEPER: The kalari payattu master is the person entrusted with opening and locking that east-facing door. It's a serious matter because the facility is considered sacred — much like a Hindu temple. But unlike a temple, a kalari houses no idols.

INSIDE THE KALARI: A *poothara* is located at the southwest corner of the facility. A semicircular mound, it has seven layers that symbolize the seven mothers who take care of everyone, including fighters. Flowers are placed on it, and a lamp is lit at dawn. Before a fight, practitioners seek blessings from Bhadrakali, the goddess of war and weapons. Located next to the *poothara* is a *guruthara*, a raised platform that symbolizes the gurus and elders of the lineage. The kalari payattu master

stands in front of the *guruthara* when he gives commands to his students.

PRE-TRAINING RITUALS:

Fighters apply oil to their bodies before they begin a session. They don a *katcha*, a cloth that measures 15 feet to 18 feet long and 9 inches wide. It's wrapped around the waist, hips and abdomen in a manner that covers and protects the body while preserving freedom of movement. The upper body is left bare.

CURRICULUM

PROGRESSION: Training begins with body-control exercises; they form the foundation needed to learn all other skills because they foster flexibility, agility, swiftness and coordination. At the next stage, students practice with sticks and canes. The long stick is called the *kettukari* and its shorter sibling the



A SIMPLE LENGTH OF FABRIC IN AN OTHERWISE EMPTY HAND CAN ENABLE A STUDENT TO ENTANGLE AN ADVERSARY AND, ONCE HE'S RESTRAINED, BIND HIS HANDS TOGETHER

kuruvadi. Once they've been mastered, students proceed to the third level: swords, shields, knives, daggers, tridents and spears. Truly learning any one of them is an arduous test of both body and mind.

ARSENAL OF WEAPONS:

At that third level, the first weapon taught is the dagger, followed by the sword. Around the same time in the student's development, the shield is introduced. Later on, he may learn the *otta*, an S-shaped staff with a wooden knob at one end. When used, vital points on the opponent's body are targeted — which can be devastating if actually struck. Or the student may opt for the *urumi*, a 5- to 6-foot-long flexible sword designed to keep an enemy at bay. Unlike most swords, the *urumi* can be folded and worn as a belt. It's also found favor with women who like to curl it in their long hair or keep it in their bag for use in an emergency.

MORE TOOLS OF WAR: The *gada* is India's mace. Made of a type of wood that's heavy and resists splitting, it requires great strength to maneuver. Despite its seemingly harmless appearance, it's a deadly

weapon, as well as a great tool for building the body.

"EMPTY" HANDS: In *kalari payattu* as in other arts, techniques include locks, strikes and grappling moves. More uncommon is its use of cloth as a weapon. A simple length of fabric in an otherwise empty hand can enable a student to entangle an adversary and, once he's restrained, bind his hands together.

LOWER BODY: Leg exercise is regarded as indispensable because a strong support system is needed for the body to maintain balance, stay mobile, and execute various offensive and defensive moves such as kicking and jumping. The *kalari payattu* leg regimen includes movements that keep the limbs straight, work them at a multitude of angles and swing them through the air in a variety of directions.

ANIMAL INFLUENCE: The eight animal postures are prized for their ability to teach students how to swiftly turn and twist their bodies. They were incorporated into the art after masters observed the movements of the elephant, lion, horse, pig,



snake, cat, rooster and fish. These postures can activate muscles and nerves that are necessary during the execution of the art — and they help keep the practitioner attuned to nature.

LEAPS OF FAITH: *Kalari payattu* jumps recruit the whole body for maximum performance and are done in a series for maximum effect, which includes building balance and explosiveness. Not surprisingly, *kalari payattu* has been described as yoga in motion.

BENEFITS OF TRAINING:

The Indian art does not propagate violence. Instead, it serves as a way to improve one's self-confidence, which grows naturally from the ability to fend off an attack. It is for this reason, as well as the fitness benefit that accompanies training, that the ancient martial art of *kalari payattu* has remained relevant in modern times. ✘

● ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Khursheed Dinshaw is a writer based in India.

TREATMENT OF WEAPONS

Kalari payattu practitioners are required to keep their weapons clean and stowed in their designated places when not being used. Certain days are allotted for prayers to the weapons, during which students express gratitude for past service and request protection in the future.

SWORD MEETS WALKING STICK

When a
Master
of the
Blade and
a Master
of the
Cane Join
Forces, the
World Gets
**A NEW
OPTION
FOR SELF-
DEFENSE!**



BY FLOYD BURK
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT REIFF



■ Black Belt Hall of Famer Dana Abbott holds his sword in a ready position (1). He chambers the weapon over his right shoulder (2) before executing a downward cut (3).

It's not often that two big-name artists express a willingness to share the spotlight in an article. It's even less frequent that we see two masters collaborate to create a self-defense system that borrows from each person's expertise. Because it is so rare, *Black Belt* jumped at the chance to corral Dana Abbott and Mark Shuey Sr. — both bona fide weapons experts and *Black Belt* Hall of Famers — so the magazine could provide the public with the lowdown on a new system of practical self-defense.

The editors chose me to research and write this story because I've known both martial artists for quite some time — in Abbott's case, about three years, and in Shuey's, more than 20.

THE CANE MASTER

In the mid-1990s at a tournament in Hawaii, I got my first glimpse of Shuey and his combat cane. He was competing, and I was judging his ring. He seemed a stoic fellow, standing there with his weapon at his side, patiently waiting. When his turn came, he performed flawlessly, demoing a range of ultra-practical cane techniques.

I mused at how refreshing it was to watch a skilled black belt wield a weap-

on with an emphasis on combat rather than flashy maneuvers. Later, I asked Shuey how he made his cane routine look so real. "I just visualize that I'm being attacked and that I've got to use life-or-death moves," he said. "I'm out there breaking bones."

I recount that story because it's integral to understanding what makes Mark Shuey tick. You see, Shuey developed an entire system based on practical and effective cane fighting. Called American Cane System, it's propagated through Cane Masters International Association (canemasters.com), an entity he founded in 2000.

The inspiration for many of the moves that make up ACS come from *tang soo do*, *taekwondo* and *hapkido*, all of which he holds black belts in, as well as various forms of stick fighting. The result is a content-rich eclectic system of cane fighting that includes both linear and circular movements for effectiveness in virtually any self-defense situation.

"One-hand and two-hand positioning, close quarters, small circle, fencing — we practice it all because you never know how you'll be attacked," Shuey says. "The more you know, the better you'll be able to win a confrontation."

THE SWORDSMAN

The first time I saw Abbott in action was at the 2005 *Black Belt* Festival of Martial Arts in Los Angeles. He and Frank Shamrock were engaged in a sword-fighting challenge match of sorts using padded weapons. Shamrock gave it his best, but Abbott just toyed with the fish-out-of-water MMA champ. The speed, power and finesse the swordsman displayed left an indelible impression on me.

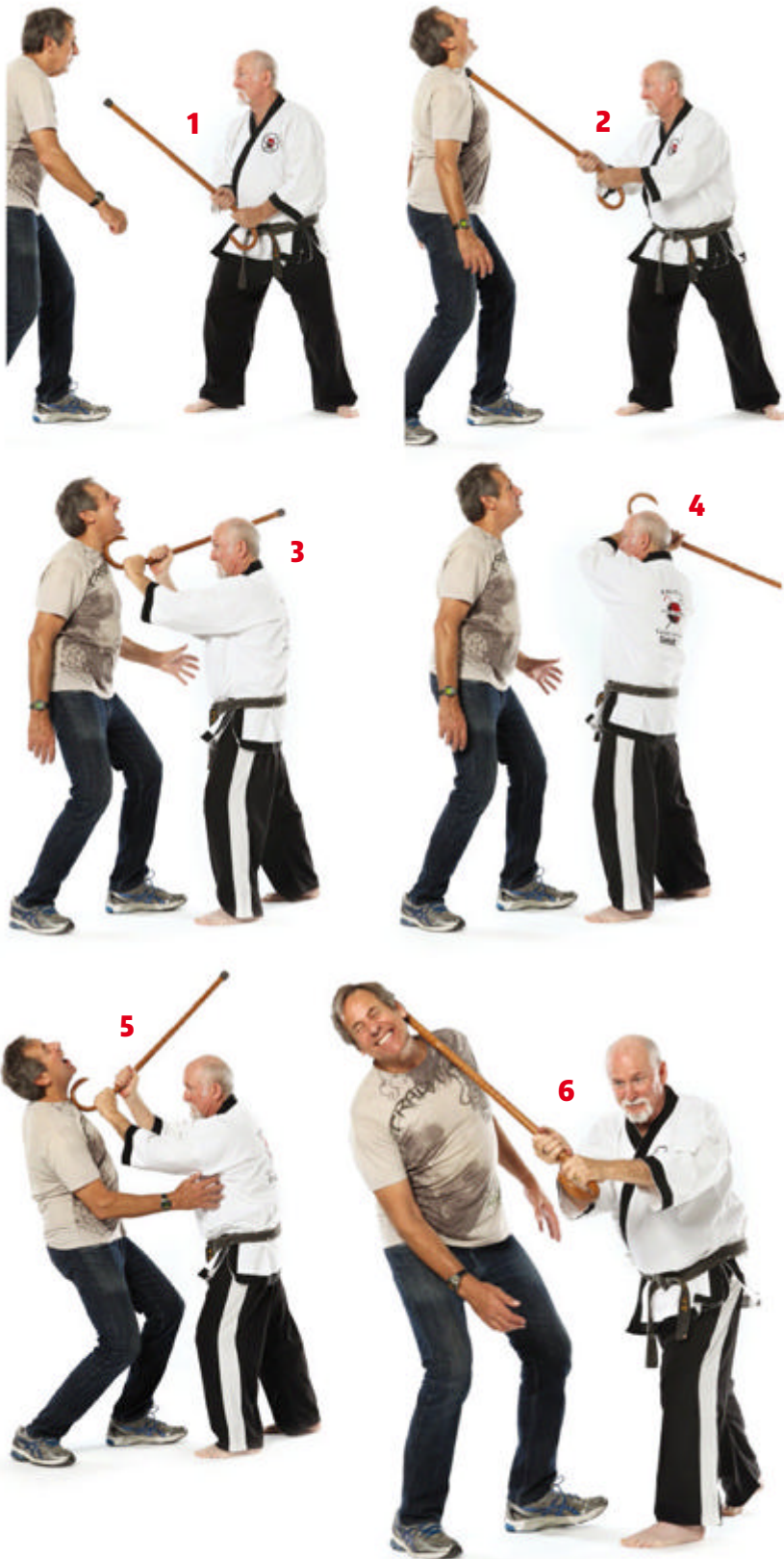
The first time I met Abbott in person was in 2012. We've conversed on numerous occasions since then, and I got to spend several days learning his samurai ways while writing "Zero to 60: How Kenjutsu Master Dana Abbott Transformed 3 Martial Artists With Limited Blade Skills Into Efficient Swordsmen!" for the December 2014/January 2015 issue of *Black Belt*.

Abbott has trained in the traditional Japanese sword arts for 40 years. He owns Samurai Sports (samuraissports.com), an organization he uses to market his products and services. Much of what he teaches are time-honored *bushido* tactics and principles that have been passed down in Japan for generations.

Such is the background that Abbott contributed to ACS.

■ Black Belt Hall of Famer Mark Shuey holds his cane in a half-guard position as he faces the threat (1). When the man becomes aggressive, Shuey chambers the weapon (2) and swings it downward into the exposed part of the opponent's neck (3).





■ Mark Shuey holds the cane in the half-guard position as the aggressor approaches (1). When the defender is certain that the man plans to attack, he thrusts the tip of the cane into his throat (2). Shuey then steps forward and executes an upward strike to the chin using the crook (3). If the opponent is still a threat, Shuey can chamber the cane over his right shoulder (4) and drive it downward into his chest (5). Shuey has the option to continue with a diagonal strike to the base of the neck (6).

TOOLS FOR BATTLE

Before digging into the meat and potatoes of ACS, it's worth discussing the system's weapon of choice. Word to the wise: If you're going to train for combat with a cane, you'd better make certain you've got one that will withstand abuse in the *dojo* and potentially on the street.

"Having an inferior cane can get you hurt," says Shuey, who produces his own line of weapons. "My canes are at least ½ inch bigger around than most canes. If you hit someone with a chintzy drugstore cane, it's likely to break. If you whack someone with one of mine, it's likely to break a bone."

Shuey designs his models with a crook that enables the user to encircle various parts of an opponent's body — like his arms, legs and neck. "That allows you to use it to crank on someone's limbs," he says.

Because it can be used to strike as well as to crank, the cane offers a versatility that's seldom seen in martial arts weaponry. For instance, you can hang onto either end while swinging it, and you also can jab with the tip, apply pressure with the shaft and entangle with the crook. "There are 26 ways to hold one of my canes, offering you a variety of locks, leverages and strikes — including pressure-point strikes," Shuey says.

Holding the cane with one hand lets you strike with more power because you can generate greater speed, which can come in handy if you're ever facing a thug with a knife, Shuey says. "You can hold the cane behind you with one hand, then instantly swing it up to 200 miles an hour. First, you hit the hand holding the knife, then you smash the head."

In contrast, two-hand grips afford you more control, he says. "You can fight up close, do multiple strikes and even use the crook to rip the skin off an attacker's neck or other body parts."

Such is the versatility that Shuey brought to this martial partnership.

POSITIONING FOR ACTION

Interestingly, much of that versatility is of little concern to Abbott when he teaches the ACS curriculum. Like all students of the Japanese sword, he tends to be a minimalist when it comes to technique. It's why he prefers to adapt the cane to the sword movements he's burned into muscle memo-

ry while keeping the number of variations small.

When he wields a cane, Abbott imagines himself with a sword — which is why he always points the weapon at his enemy. As he maneuvers, he can stab at his opponent's face, neck and chest, or raise the cane overhead before smacking him on the noggin or the hand.

Abbott isn't into cane design; he's content to leave that to Shuey. Instead, he focuses on grip and positioning. Relax, re-grip, ready position, guard — those four commands are often heard when Abbott teaches ACS.

Relax refers to your state when you're using the cane as a walking aid or maneuvering it for no particular purpose. You're normally grasping the crook, Abbott says.

Re-grip refers to the first thing you do when confronting a threat. "Bring both arms down to your sides, loosen your grip on top of the crook and allow your right hand to slide down to where the curve begins," Abbott says. "Re-grip in this new position."

Ready position refers to the stance you assume when trouble is unfolding. "Bend your elbows to raise your forearms and the cane," Abbott says. "Complete the two-hand grip by grasping the shaft with your left hand in front of your right hand, which is close to the crook." The cane should be held fairly low with the tip aimed at your opponent's chest.

Guard is your initial line of defense, which establishes your physical perimeter," Abbott says. "There are two guard positions: the full guard and the half-guard, both of which are executed from the ready position. In the full guard, your forward arm is parallel to the

ground and the tip is pointing toward the aggressor's throat, keeping him at bay. In the half-guard, your forward arm is bent at the elbow. The half-guard protects your head and shoulders from close-quarters attacks."

In the guard position, you're poised to attack, defend or maneuver out of harm's way, Abbott says. Note that you can execute techniques from the ready position, but most are more efficient and effective when done from the guard.

TECHNIQUES FOR COMBAT

When using a cane as a sword, Abbott teaches that you have access to techniques that fall into four categories.

"A *strike* is a long-distance tool," Abbott says. "It's often done from the upward position, where you lift the cane above your shoulders and bring it downward onto your opponent. Direct strikes can target the head, neck, torso,

arms, hands or other boney areas. You can use strikes to hit the attacker or just to keep him out of range.

"The *jab* is for thrusting and stabbing. Target areas are the head, neck, solar plexus and groin.

"A *rap* is a short-distance strike. Speed and power are generated from the center of your body. It strikes or pushes your opponent away. Target areas include the head, neck, torso, arms and hands.

"A *hook* is a short-range tool used like an uppercut — for when someone gets too close or has grabbed you." It uses the crook to make contact, Abbott says.

No matter which of these techniques you use, don't neglect situational awareness, Shuey says. "Pay attention to your surroundings. Most people who are attacked never see it coming."

If a fight erupts, go all-out, Shuey continues. "When you fight soft, you



■ Dana Abbott holds a training cane in the guard position (1). As soon as he determines that the other man means to do him harm, Abbott simply raises his extended arms to drive the tip of the cane into the aggressor's throat (2).

DAMAGED GOODS? NO WAY!

► Mark Shuey Sr.'s work with the cane has enabled thousands of people to defend themselves, but I believe he's made a more important contribution to humanity: He helps the weaker members of society feel better about themselves and as such is a champion for all who perceive themselves as damaged goods.

The media tend to fixate on people who are young and healthy. Those who are old, sick or out of shape are often left thinking their life is almost over. Through his canes, Shuey offers them a second chance.

His message is simple and direct: If you're a martial artist who did a high-impact art in your more active years but you're starting to see your body slow down, you don't have to quit.

A cane may be just the low-impact weapon you need, not to mention a new challenge to reinvigorate your training.


If you're ill but active, a cane can offer you more mobility coupled with the ability to defend yourself should the need arise.

I've seen this firsthand. George Owens is one of the martial artists I call *sensei*. Now in his mid-80s, he's suffered numerous health problems over the years, and they've forced him to alter his martial arts training significantly.

During a recent phone call with Owens, he seemed jubilant. "I just got some of Mark Shuey's Cane Masters videos and one of his canes," he said. "It's fun — I really like it."

He went on and on about the merits of what to him is a brand-new martial arts weapon. There's a good chance he and I will be practicing cane defense during my next visit to his *dojo* in Arkansas. If he reads this article before then, we might even be doing ACS.

— F.B.



■ Although the cane-as-a-sword techniques that Mark Shuey and Dana Abbott have devised will work with any sturdy hooked walking stick, they're more effective when executed with a specially designed tool like this one from Cane Masters.

get hurt. Put out [maximum] effort until the attacker is down and the threat is gone."

DECISION TIME

You're already an accomplished martial artist. Why should you consider learning ACS for personal defense? The following are among the reasons Shuey suggests:

- You can carry a cane anywhere. It's the only weapon you can legally possess on a plane, in a theme park or wherever.
- Your cane will always be in your hand and ready to deploy. You never have to pull it out of a pocket or purse.

- The cane's construction enables you to keep an attacker up to 5 feet away — or generate leverage at close range.
- With the right training, you can assume a ready position or guard stance with the cane in front of your body, letting the aggressor know he's facing a martial artist who's prepared to defend himself. That alone can deter an attack, which, Shuey and Abbott agree, is always preferable to engaging in an actual fight. ✕

● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** *Floyd Burk is a San Diego-based 10th-degree black belt with more than 40 years of experience in the arts. He's also senior adviser to Independent Karate Schools of America. iksa.com*

ONE ART, TWO WAYS

► It says a lot about the genius of a self-defense system when the two martial artists who created it can emphasize different facets while remaining true to its roots.

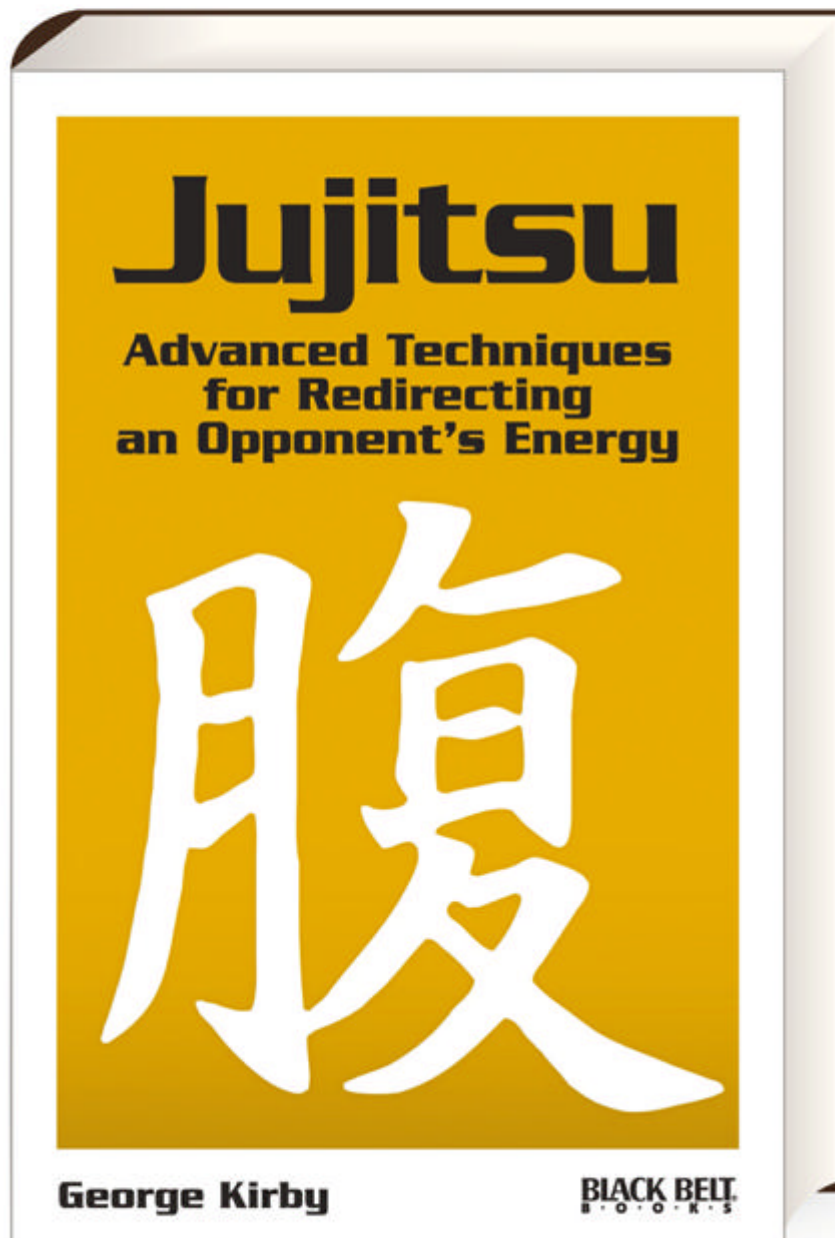
Case in point: In the American Cane System, we have Mark Shuey Sr. teaching with a Korean flavor because of his background in *tang soo do*, *taekwondo* and *hapkido*, and we have Dana Abbott teaching with a Japanese flavor because of his background in the Japanese sword arts.

Once you get beyond the basics presented in this article, their styles are as different as night and day, says Floyd Burk, author of this story. "Shuey will hit you upside your head 100 different ways. Abbott will just stab you in the eye or throat. It's the circle of hapkido vs. the line of *ken-jutsu*."

— Editor

Learn to use the momentum of an attack to your advantage!

George Kirby's latest offering from Black Belt Books, *Jujitsu: Advanced Techniques for Redirecting an Opponent's Energy*, addresses the theory and application of how to redirect the momentum and energy of an opponent's attack. Whether you are a student of *jujitsu*, *aikido*, judo, karate or any other martial art, this is a must-have book for helping you connect the dots between concepts and actions.



Through extensive discussions and detailed photographs and diagrams, Kirby, a 10th-degree black belt who has taught jujitsu since 1967, describes the following:

- how to apply circular movement, balance and momentum to execute martial arts techniques quickly and effectively with minimal effort
- how to maintain your *saiki tanden* (center) in an attack
- how to use an attacker's momentum against him in devastating fashion through appropriate application of his and your *ki* (energy) and *kuzushi* (off-balancing)
- and so much more!

Professor Kirby is an internationally recognized martial arts instructor who has led seminars throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and Israel, and he is also the founder of the Budoshin Ju-Jjitsu Yudanshakai, an educational foundation. Kirby was awarded the title of *hanshi* in 1997, his 10th-degree grade in 2000 and was named *Black Belt's* 2007 Instructor of the Year.

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BALANCE OF POWER

How the Concept of **KUZUSHI** Can
Enable You to Destroy an Opponent's
Base and Neutralize an Attack

BY S.D. SEONG • PHOTOGRAPHY BY PATRICK STERNKOPF



IN JUDO, OFF-BALANCING AN OPPONENT IS ACCOMPLISHED BY MOVING HIM IN ANY NUMBER OF DIRECTIONS. IT IS ESSENTIAL WHETHER YOU PLAN TO JUST MOVE HIM OR TO THROW HIM."

So writes *Black Belt* Hall of Famer George Kirby in his new book *Jujitsu: Advanced Techniques for Redirecting an Opponent's Energy*.

The concept is called *kuzushi*, Japanese for the act of off-balancing an opponent. It can be applied to *jujitsu*, Kirby's core art, as well as to practi-

cally every other martial art on earth, he says. Most important, it works for self-protection — in fact, it opens up a whole slew of options for the trained defender.

"Your success will depend on how effectively and quickly you can destroy your opponent's physical or even psychological sense of balance," Kirby

writes. "You really can't execute techniques optimally unless you can move his center to off-balance him."

When it comes to effecting the all-important off-balance, you have numerous options, Kirby says. They include pushing or pulling the person, hitting or tripping him, using pressure points or balance points, and even using verbal or non-contact distractions.

"All these will work, although some require more proficiency than others," Kirby writes. "What you do to off-balance an opponent in a given situation is largely based on the situation and what you want to do after you have accomplished that."





BASIC HAND THROW ON THE GROUND: The attacker prepares to punch George Kirby (1). Kirby stops the technique with a cross-block in which his right forearm makes contact with the attacker's right arm, knocking it to Kirby's right side (2). This off-balances the attacker. Kirby then grabs the attacker's right hand with his left hand (3) and sets up a basic hand throw to the left as the attacker tries to regain his own balance by moving to his right (4). Kirby rotates to his left to execute the throw, using the attacker's attempt to regain his own balance, to execute the throw (5). The jujitsu master comes up onto one knee and sets a wrist-press submission (6).

LESS VIOLENT

Not all self-defense situations call for a potentially lethal response. Kirby acknowledges this in the book: "You may choose to use a relatively nonviolent approach such as a visual or verbal distraction. A simple hand or finger motion, quickly looking to the right or left, looking *through* the person's eyes as if he wasn't even there (one of my favorites), or giving an unexpected or unanticipated verbal response to his verbal command or question (in his attempt to distract you) are all nonphysical means of off-balancing a person."

Moving one step higher on the use-of-force continuum, Kirby describes the use of balance points, which require minor physical contact with the aggressor. "If all you want to do is get past him or gently move him out of the way, you can use an appropriate balance point," he writes. "You gently place one hand on him — usually on his upper or lower torso. You

place your other hand on the opposite side. This positioning allows you to create a push-pull effect to off-balance the person, usually by turning him slightly."

Kirby says that such verbal and physical distractions can take an opponent's mind off his original intentions for a moment, which can open a window of opportunity for seizing control. "It will create a time gap of three-tenths to seven-tenths of a second during which you can use a self-defense action," he writes. "This is the time his brain takes to recognize what happened and his body to react to it."

"If you can create this reaction gap, you will have an opening to effectively protect yourself, possibly even by creating additional gaps, which will give you even more time to respond."

MORE VIOLENT

"If you are able to ward off the attack by simply moving out of the way or us-

ing a balance-point technique, so much the better," Kirby writes. Unfortunately, nonviolence is not always an option in self-defense because your opponent may have initiated his attack already. In such situations, what do you do to get past his assault so you can use kuzushi?

"Actually, you don't want to get 'past' his assault because that means you have to go through it," Kirby writes. "If his attack is a hit, kick or push, his assault will definitely off-balance you and possibly cause you serious injury. If the attacker's goal is to grab or hold you in some manner, you will be prevented from moving and you'll be kept within his area of maximum effectiveness, which conversely may also be yours."

"So a better question is, How do you stop or get around his assault so that you can remain balanced while using his momentum and off-balancing him?"

You have four options for doing so, Kirby says:



FINGER-BRACE REAR TAKEDOWN: The assailant holds George Kirby in a simulated rear mugging attack (1). Kirby raises his right arm and grasps the man's fingers to pull the hand away from his mouth (2). The jujitsu practitioner maneuvers his left hand out of the man's grip as he bends at least three fingers of the man's right hand backward just above the knuckles (3). Kirby begins turning clockwise to execute the takedown (4).

Once he's rotated 180 degrees, Kirby increases the pressure on the back of his fingers, just above the knuckles, and the man attempts to move backward to alleviate it (5). Kirby doesn't pull the man's fingers to finish the throw; instead, he continues to push against the back of his fingers in an outward and downward circle. That causes the attacker to destroy his own balance and take himself to the ground (6-7).

- blocking or deflecting the attempted hit, kick or grab
- striking a vital area, distracting with a hit or attacking a pressure point
- going straight in or going around the direction of attack
- using a joint lock.

"These four general sets of responses can be used singly or in combination to buy you the reaction-gap time so that you can execute a self-defense technique while your attacker is still trying to figure out what you're doing," Kirby writes.

The interval within which all this takes place is at most two seconds, Kirby says. "That's all the time you will get — but it's also all the time you'll need to find a way into the attacker's center so that you can easily off-balance him."

MOST IMPORTANT

"Establishing and maintaining your balance, like anything else in jujitsu, is not something you will learn overnight," Kirby writes. "It will take a great deal of practice before it becomes auto-

matic, even when you are standing still in the *dojo*. With practice, you will learn how to move around while maintaining your balance and how to re-establish it with relative ease in one or two steps. Once you have your balance down, actually know where your center is and can keep it in the right place so that your base is secure, you have completed the first part of *kuzushi*."

The second part, of course, is targeting your opponent's equilibrium with a trip, throw, lock or takedown.

"Kuzushi is absolutely essential if you plan to execute any technique on an opponent," Kirby writes. "However, even though unbalancing your opponent is a really simple concept, there's a lot more to it than meets the eye."

For this reason, practicing *kuzushi* is at least as important as fine-tuning your blocks, kicks and punches, he adds. ✕

● **ABOUT THE EXPERT:** A 10th-degree black belt, George Kirby was Black Belt's 2007 Instructor of the Year. This story was excerpted from *Jujitsu: Advanced Techniques for Redirecting an Opponent's Energy*, which is available for purchase at blackbeltmag.com.



THE PROLIFIC PROFESSOR

► Professor George Kirby — as senior jujitsu instructors are often called — is not one to relax in retirement. Since his career as a school-teacher ended, he's continued to put finger to keyboard in an effort to share the knowledge he's acquired over the past 48 years. His works include the following, many of which are available at blackbeltmag.com, amazon.com and select retail outlets.

- *Jujitsu: Basic Techniques of the Gentle Art* (1983)
- *Jujitsu: Intermediate Techniques of the Gentle Art* (1985)
- *Jutte: Japanese Power of Ten Hands Weapon* (1987)
- *Jujitsu Nerve Techniques: The Invisible Weapon of Self-Defense* (2001)
- *Advanced Jujitsu: The Science Behind the Gentle Art* (2006)
- *Jujitsu Figure-4 Locks: Submission Holds of the Gentle Art* (2009)
- *Jujitsu: Basic Techniques of the Gentle Art — Expanded Edition* (2011)
- *Jujitsu: Advanced Techniques for Redirecting an Opponent's Energy* (2015)

THE GENIUS

OF JOE

IMPROVE YOUR MARTIAL ARTS,
IMPROVE YOUR LIFE WITH THIS
WISDOM FROM THE WORLD'S
GREATEST KARATE FIGHTER!

by KEVIN HUDSON



There I was, standing in the ring with the greatest karate fighter in history. Not only the greatest karate fighter but also the first heavyweight world-champion kickboxer, I remember thinking. This man had trained with Bruce Lee, performed on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*, even sparred with Muhammad Ali, and here I was about to go three rounds with him.

"When the bell rings, should I go out and whack him?" I asked myself. "He's a legend and he's over 50 years old — I don't want to hurt him. ..."

The answer came quickly. The bell sounded, and we both advanced. I noticed that his fighting stance was the same as he'd used in his previous matches. His feet were firmly planted, and he moved with purpose. His right hand was held high, around cheekbone level, and his left hand was positioned near his waist, with his arm at a 90-degree angle.

Lewis wasn't dancing around quite as stealthily as in the YouTube videos I'd watched and the DVDs I'd collected. After all, he was older now, and his sparring strategy had changed slightly. Nevertheless, he was dictating the pace. He was snorting like a bull, but in a rhythmic pattern — as if he were a steam engine, building up energy to finally make that first tug on a long string of railroad cars.

Suddenly, my head snapped back. My line of sight, which had been aimed at my opponent's chest, was racing toward the ceiling. As I refocused on his chest, my mind started working again. I should have blocked with my front hand and countered, I figured. Instead, I'd just gotten nailed with the hardest jab I ever experienced. The punch was lightning fast and possessed the power of a telephone pole being shot out of a cannon, and it had landed squarely on my nose.

The switch in my head turned on. This guy may have trained with Bruce Lee and made himself into a legend, I thought, but now I need to hit him hard to keep him from killing me.

Such was my introduction to sparring with Joe Lewis. It happened to be my first test while training under him; fortunately, it wasn't my last. During the many subsequent opportunities I had to work with him before his passing in 2012, I came to realize what a treasure he was. Earning my fifth-, sixth- and seventh-degree black belts from him was an honor and a privilege.

MASTER OF ARTS

Lewis made fighting sound easy, yet he could take a simple technique like a jab and teach an all-day seminar on its nuances, purposes, variations and history. Often he'd talk and talk, and I'd look at one of my fellow black belts and whisper, "I wish he'd just get to the sparring." Being a young fighter who regarded sparring as the only way to learn what worked and what didn't, I sometimes became impatient with what I viewed as overanalysis.

Of course, I grew to appreciate the Joe Lewis teaching method. He taught not just lessons for the ring but also lessons for life. Everything he'd learned from his combat tour in Vietnam to the wars he waged in the ring eventually became lessons for those he mentored.

When the editor of *Black Belt* asked me to winnow all that Lewis had passed to me into an article on the top 10 lessons, I knew it would be challenging. He was such a genius in so many ways that his wisdom could fill a book. However,

I vowed to get it done. And as I learned from Lewis, in fighting and in life, there is no "try." It's either done or not done. You either win or lose — there's no gray area.

LESSON 1 — FOR LIFE

CUM CORDE ET ANIMIS.

This Latin verse, which can be found on Lewis' seal and every black-belt certificate he issued, translates as "with heart and spirit." Anyone who's worked with him for more than 60 seconds knows exactly why it's there. Lewis embodied that notion. He taught all his black belts that we must be intentional about our strategy. We must stand up in the face of adversity, even when the majority wants to head the other way.

Lewis preached the importance of executing acts with profound conviction. He believed — and wrote in his training manual — that heart is what you fight to defend and the ego is what you fight to gain.

In the many conversations we had, Lewis made it clear that every fighter needs an "attitude technique," one move that can serve as his or her go-to technique when things aren't looking good. It should be something that works 99 percent of the time and can change the face of the fight, he'd say, and when you use it, it must be executed with complete conviction and intensity — with heart and spirit.

LESSON 2 — FOR THE RING

IT ONLY TAKES ONE.

Lewis told me more than once that when he competed, he didn't need an elaborate arsenal. He needed just one technique, and for him, it was the side kick. He agreed with Bruce Lee, who advised us not to fear the man who does 1,000 kicks one time as much as the man who does one kick 1,000 times.

This meshes with Lewis' advice about having an attitude technique. Watching his early fights, you can see that his side kick was unbeatable. In one match, he broke his opponent's ribs — and then when the guy turned so he could continue fighting, Lewis used the same side kick and reportedly cracked ribs on that side, too.

All fighters should develop one technique until it's unstoppable, Lewis said. Unfortunately, not everyone does because of the time commitment. He made the side kick his attitude technique by following the philosophy of Lee and practicing it up to eight hours a day.

LESSON 3 — FOR THE RING

RHYTHM IS KING.

The man who controls the rhythm wins the match, Lewis would say. He passed along that message in virtually every seminar, touting the importance of head rhythm, body rhythm and foot rhythm. Use head rhythm to fake or feint, he said. Use foot rhythm to draw an opponent in. Use body rhythm to jive and juke, making your opponent fire out of step, after which you counter quickly.

Rhythm control must be gained and maintained immediately after the first bell, Lewis taught. As I mentioned in the intro, he even possessed the ability to dictate rhythm using his breath.

LESSON 4 — FOR THE RING

WHERE THERE'S WEIGHT, THERE'S POWER.

Although Lewis' defensive repertoire included many tools, he always emphasized that you must block in a way that provides the quickest and easiest option for a powerful counter. He'd speak of the need to shift 10 percent of your weight to the front or the rear during a block in preparation for your next technique. That way, you can absorb an incoming blow while minimizing the damage, then immediately shift your weight for the follow-up.

Such body shifting not only provides for absorption of energy but also ensures proper balance. Don't allow an incoming technique to force your feet to reset, Lewis taught. If you have to reset, you can't immediately fire back with efficiency and power.

LESSON 5 — FOR LIFE

BE TRUE TO YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY.

Lewis was known for not sugarcoating things. Whatever he thought, he usually spoke. This could be embarrassing, but often it was profound. He'd always follow those embarrassing moments with that Joe Lewis smile and say, "What's so funny — what are you laughing at?"

He was true to himself regardless of what people thought or the media portrayed. He considered his black belts to be his family. We knew that if we needed him for anything, he'd be there. I remember him telling folks many times to not mess with his black belts, and we respected that. It made us feel good to know that the greatest fighter of all time had our backs.

LESSON 6 — FOR THE RING

UNDERSTAND THE OPPONENT YOU'RE FACING AND ADJUST YOUR STRATEGY ACCORDINGLY.

Whether the action is in the ring or on the street, Lewis advocated separating your adversaries into three categories: those who are more experienced, those who are more powerful and those who are faster. Then, he said, you should break down each one and design a strategy for victory.

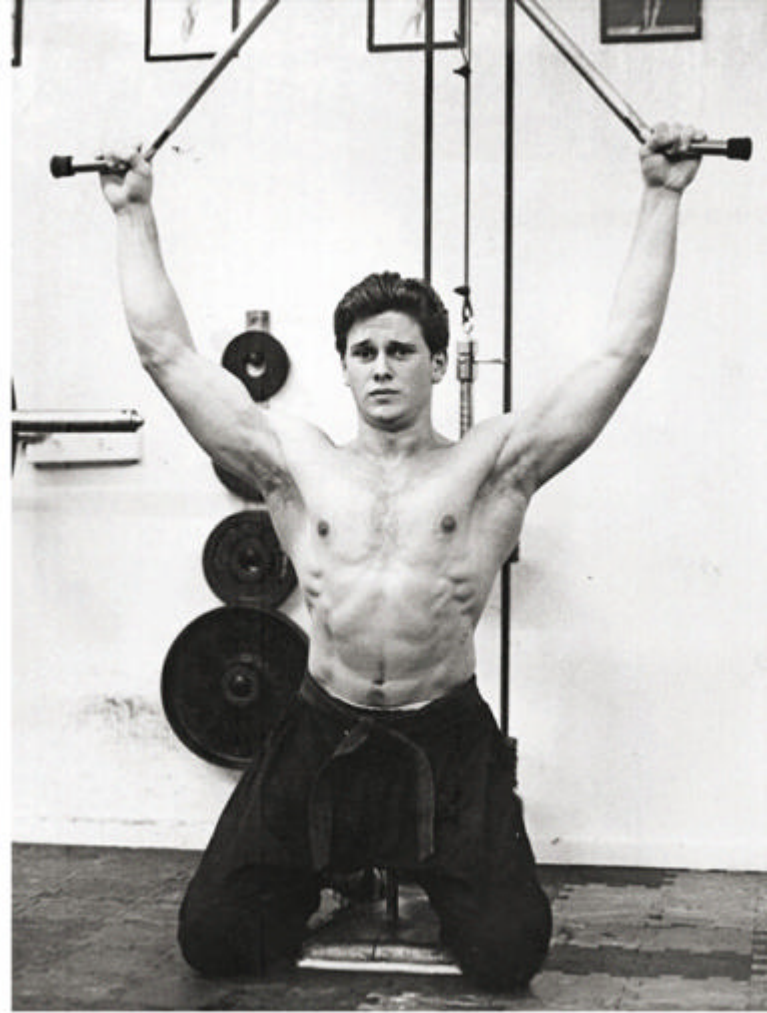
Within each category are subsets based on whether the opponent's style is emotional or physical, Lewis said. Physical fighters are easy to detect because they try to dominate with their body instead of their mind. In contrast, emotional fighters act from the heart. They're more impulsive and unpredictable, and they're more often in touch with their inner sense of rhythm.

LESSON 7 — FOR THE RING

FOOTWORK IS IMPORTANT.

Lewis taught that there are only two ways to fire a technique: from a position or from movement. For both, footwork is crucial.

A voracious student of fight films, Lewis owned a vast library of videos from around the world, including boxing, kickboxing and MMA bouts. He spoke often of how he and Bruce Lee would study films of Muhammad Ali. At many of his seminars, Lewis lectured on how Ali was a master of



footwork and movement and, therefore, was able to keep his opponents off-balance.

Footwork is a versatile skill set, Lewis would say, because it enables you to accomplish five tasks in a fight: strengthen your position, entrap your opponent, reset, absorb an incoming blow and recover.

LESSON 8 — FOR LIFE

BEING A GOOD BLACK BELT MEANS BEING A GOOD COACH.

Lewis could assess a fighter's ability quickly, then fine-tune that person's good attributes even as he improved the weaknesses. Being a black belt under him meant striving to do the same for others — by helping them achieve the same things you've achieved.

As a world champion, Lewis taught all his students as if they were fighting for the title next week. He wouldn't try to push his style on everyone. No one could mimic his style perfectly, he said, but they could benefit from what he knew about the fundamentals and therefore improve their fighting functionality in a short time. That's why people like me would travel many hours just to spend one hour under his guidance.

LESSON 9 — FOR THE RING

STABILIZE YOUR TARGET.

Of paramount importance to martial artists who wish

to control the rhythm of the fight and land effective blows is doing what's necessary to make your target momentarily stable. Lewis spoke often about how Mike Tyson had lost his title to Buster Douglas because Douglas understood the jab and used it effectively to stabilize Tyson. A boxer's primary stabilization technique is the jab, Lewis said. If you're a kickboxer or MMA fighter, you also can use a jab side kick or stop-kick, or post a leg or jab as an obstruction.

Stabilization enables a fighter to display ring generalship. He or she can stabilize a target with footwork to manipulate distance, either hemming an opponent into a corner or posting the person against the cage.

The truth of this Lewis lesson was driven home for me when, after my mentor passed, I decided to test for black belt under Bill "Superfoot" Wallace. That's when I witnessed the way Wallace would stabilize his opponents with a jab or a jab side kick. In a conversation, he reiterated what Lewis had taught about stabilization being the key to winning.

LESSON 10 — FOR LIFE

BE PREPARED AND INTENTIONAL.

One of the greatest lessons I learned from the legend was to never let an opponent get an advantage over me with regard to physical conditioning. It was part of Lewis' mantra: Be prepared. I often share this with my students, explaining that I've fought in shape and out of shape, and after comparing the two, in shape is far better.

Applying this to the world outside the ring is simple: Life is a battle. On a daily basis, we must evaluate our plans, decide if this particular battle is against a southpaw, a croucher or a slugger, and then execute our plan. Lewis advocated having a strategy, being intentional about it and executing it as planned. That will maximize your chance of staying in the fight and finishing strong.

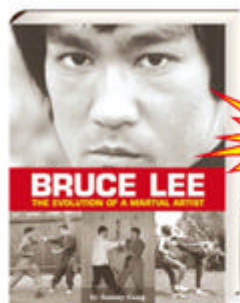
Staying in the fight and finishing strong is precisely what Joe Lewis did until the very end. And although he's no longer with us, his legacy lives on in every black belt he promoted and every martial artist whose life he touched, whether through a seminar, a training manual, a DVD lesson — or a magazine article like this one. ✕

For more information about Kevin Hudson, visit learnkaratelessonsonline.com.

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A free guide titled "Joe Lewis: How the Bruce Lee Training Method Made Him — and Can Make You — a Better Fighter" is available for immediate download. Search for it at blackbeltmag.com.





Bruce Lee: The Evolution of a Martial Artist

by Tommy Gong

Bruce Lee: The Evolution of a Martial Artist is a must-have for fans of the iconic legend of martial arts movies as well as students of the martial arts, and *jeet kune do* in particular. It's a close, personal look into the world of Bruce Lee that cannot be matched!

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Jujitsu: Advanced Techniques for Redirecting an Opponent's Energy

by George Kirby

Use the momentum of an attack to your advantage! George Kirby's latest book addresses the theory and application of how to redirect the momentum and energy of an opponent's attack. Students of any martial art — "hard" or "soft" — will learn the connection between the concept of circular movements, balance and momentum and their application to martial arts techniques.

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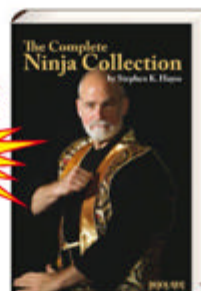
Jujitsu: Basic Techniques of the Gentle Art — Expanded Edition

by George Kirby

This seminal primer by *Black Belt* Hall of Fame member George Kirby is the perfect place to begin a journey toward *jujitsu* mastery.

165 pgs. (ISBN: 978-0-89750-198-9)

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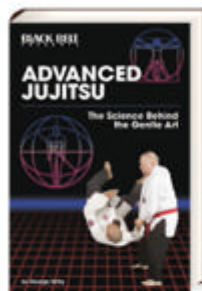
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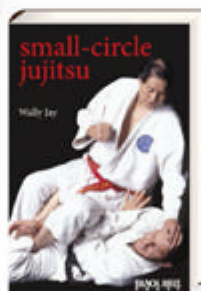
Advanced Jujitsu: The Science Behind the Gentle Art

by George Kirby

George Kirby takes you into advanced concepts that will simplify your training, help you learn new techniques faster and grant you deeper access to the inner workings of *jujitsu*.

131 pgs. (ISBN: 978-0-89750-152-1)

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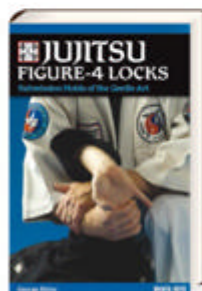
Small-Circle Jujitsu

by Wally Jay

Fully illustrated, this book covers falling, key movements, resuscitation, all forms of joint locks, throwing techniques, chokes and self-defense applications.

256 pgs. (ISBN: 978-0-89750-122-4)

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Jujitsu Figure-4 Locks: Submission Holds of the Gentle Art

by George Kirby

As a continuation of his series, George Kirby now focuses on the essential principles of *jujitsu*'s most effective trapping techniques: the figure-4 lock and its variations.

191 pgs. (ISBN: 978-0-89750-180-4)

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HYPER VEST PRO

In this issue's Fit to Fight column, you read about the virtues of using a weight vest. This unit from Hyperwear is called the Hyper Vest Pro. Its weight ranges from 22 pounds to 64 pounds. The low-profile fit means you can hide it under a *gi* top if you're so inclined. The compression fabric and elastic cords keep it in place during abrupt movements such as those encountered in *kata*, yet they don't interfere with breathing or twisting. The front-mounted zipper makes it an easy-on, easy-off item.

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A GUIDE TO IMPROVISED WEAPONRY

Master Sgt. Terry Schappert (Green Beret) and Adam Slutsky joined forces to create this 207-page text on fighting back using whatever tool is handy. Among the 100 everyday objects that are highlighted as "weapons": a candy bar, a Frisbee, a plunger, an oven mitt, a roll of toilet paper and, yes, even a bag of dog poop. While the book offers serious advice, there's just enough of a tongue-in-cheek tone to make it fun to read.

\$16

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JAPANESE SWORDSMANSHIP

This DVD set comes from Dana Abbott, one of the two masters featured in this issue's "Sword Meets Walking Stick" story. Abbott devotes the first disc to the *bokken*, the wooden sword most martial artists use for training. On the second disc, he covers training and cutting with the *katana* the way he learned under the best *kenjutsu* masters in Japan. 120 minutes

\$40

LEARNTHESWORD.COM

HACKING THE HINGE

Subtitled *Hip Mobility to Swings and Deadlifts*, this DVD presents a workshop in which Charlie Weingroff and *Black Belt* contributing editor Dr. Mark Cheng teach everything you need to know about this all-important body part. The topics revolve around how to use the barbell deadlift and kettlebell swing to promote fitness and build strength, both of which are essential for optimal martial arts performance. 156 minutes

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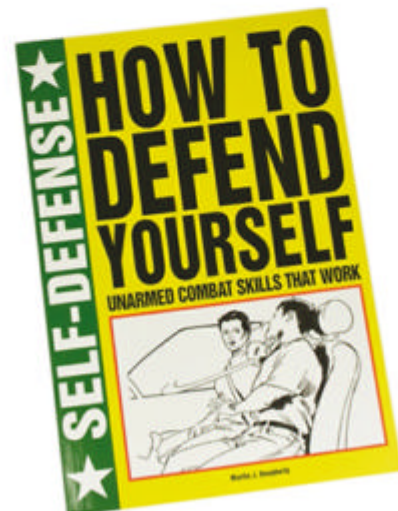
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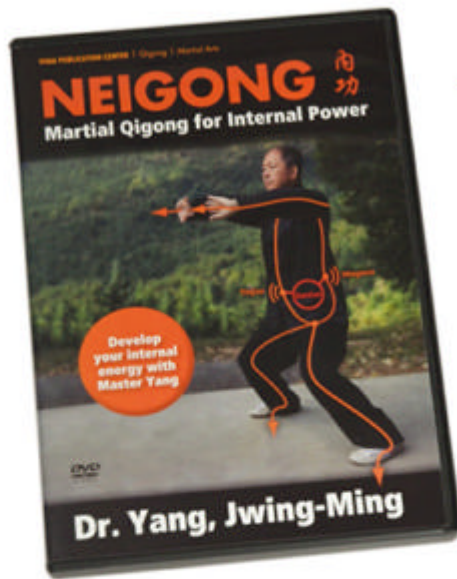
HOW TO DEFEND YOURSELF

Martin J. Dougherty must be a master of minimalism. How else could the author — a practitioner of *jujitsu*, kickboxing and combatives — squeeze into a 48-page book all his recommendations for fending off punches, kicks and grabs, not to mention using blocks, deflections, evasions, pre-emptive strikes and counterattacks? Fortunately, those 48 pages are profusely illustrated with sketches.

\$10

STMARTINS.COM





← NEIGONG: MARTIAL QIGONG FOR INTERNAL POWER

This instructional DVD from *Black Belt Hall of Famer* Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming addresses the ways in which the traditional Chinese art develops *chi* and boosts circulation. It draws from Taoist and Buddhist teachings to facilitate recovery, enhance stamina, increase striking force, and improve rooting and balance. Along the way, the practitioner begins to enjoy augmented awareness and coordination. 340 minutes

\$50

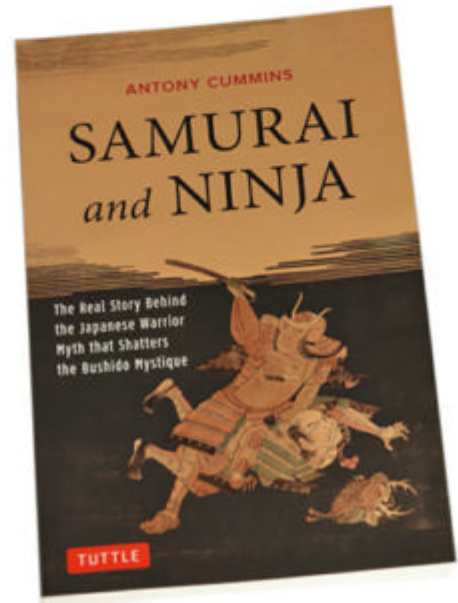
YMAA.COM

SAMURAI AND NINJA →

The subtitle of this book — *The Real Story Behind the Japanese Warrior Myth That Shatters the Bushido Mystique* — reveals its angle. It's the latest work from ninja historian Antony Cummins, who's penned four other books on the subject. This time around, Cummins serves as mythbuster while describing the two warrior groups in their true historical context. 222 pages ✂

\$15

TUTTLEPUBLISHING.COM



#AimFitness



Proven Plan for Building Your Business

by Floyd Burk

If you own or manage a *dojo* and are finding it tough to meet your growth goals, consider contacting Rev Marketing 2 U. The company takes all the successful strategies its staff has gleaned from assisting different types of businesses and brings them to bear on the martial arts industry.

Actually, I'd like to modify my opening statement: If you're even *planning* to open a dojo, consider contacting them. That will ensure you get the most out of your investment.

AT THE HELM of the company (revmarketing2u.com) stands founder and president Tracy Lee Thomas. For the past 15 years, he's made it his mission to help businesses succeed. An experienced martial artist — he's taught *krav maga* since leaving the U.S. military in 1991 — Thomas knows the ins and outs of running a school, and he admits that he struggled until he formulated a comprehensive set of methods and processes designed to foster success.

Thomas believes that do-it-yourself marketing will take you only so far. It's like trying to teach yourself karate: You can spend endless hours reinventing the wheel, and even then you might never rise to the level of expert. Or you can find someone with experience to guide you.

Any dojo can see growth if the instructor follows a plan devised by a good marketing consultant, but to thrive long term, that plan needs to be adjusted constantly to account for the development of technology and the evolving business environment. To that end, Thomas and company offer the following services.

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT: In this digital age, a website is the key marketing tool for practically every type of business. Unfortunately, many people let their sites lapse into a state of hibernation, which can send potential students to other schools. Your site needs to jump off the screen and grab

the viewer's attention. The ability to do that comes from having an engaging design, an easy-to-navigate interface, and content that's planned and posted regularly.

- **Search engine optimization:** That great website you've built still needs to be found when prospective students do a Google, Bing or Yahoo search, and it needs to rank high in the search results. Otherwise, it won't get any traffic, and you won't get any leads. It's all about visibility.

- **Social media:** You may not be into Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and the other platforms, but you need to pay attention to them because more and more consumers go there first when looking for new places to spend their money. For a business to prosper in the 21st century, it needs to be liked, followed and pinned.

- **Reputation management:** It's important to make sure most of those social media mentions are positive. The last thing your dojo needs is bad reviews and negative publicity. Most people don't have much control over such things, but Rev Marketing 2 U can help you manage them to maintain a positive presence online.

- **E-commerce solutions:** If your school also sells gear, you probably know that e-commerce is the future. Success entails more than just moving products, however; it also involves developing relationships with others who will sell your goods on their sites.

- **Pay-per-click campaigns:** They've been likened to steroids for the art of marketing. The reason is they give immediate returns and boost revenues — all while you're implementing other growth strategies.

WHETHER YOU KNOW IT or not, Rev Marketing 2 U is doing a service to all martial artists — even those who don't run a dojo. That's because when instructors succeed, their schools stay open. When schools stay open, students have more choices, and those choices are available for the long haul. On an even grander scale, the community benefits from having a larger population of fit, responsible citizens who know how to defend themselves. ✘

Photo Courtesy of Tracy Lee Thomas



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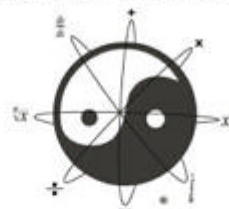
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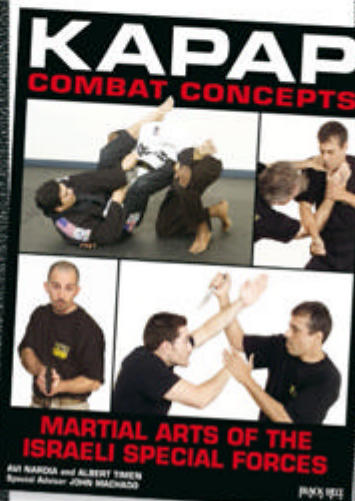
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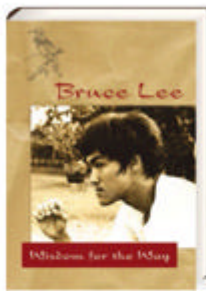
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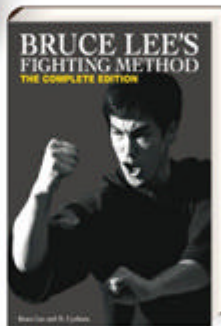
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by Bruce Lee

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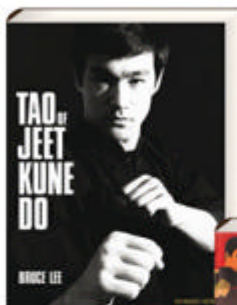


Bruce Lee's Fighting Method: Basic Training and Self-Defense Techniques

by Ted Wong and Richard Bustillo

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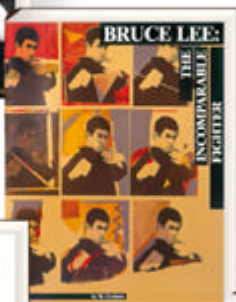
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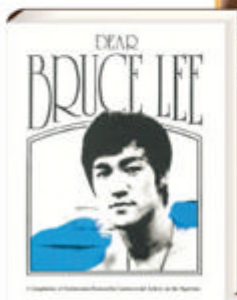
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by M. Uyehara

Get to know the true Bruce Lee through the eyes of the author. Pound for pound, he may have been the greatest fighter who ever lived. Read about his good and bad times, his dreams and destiny shattered by his early death. The author, a student of Lee's and one of his best friends, is the co-author of the best-selling *Bruce Lee's Fighting Method* volumes. Fully illustrated.

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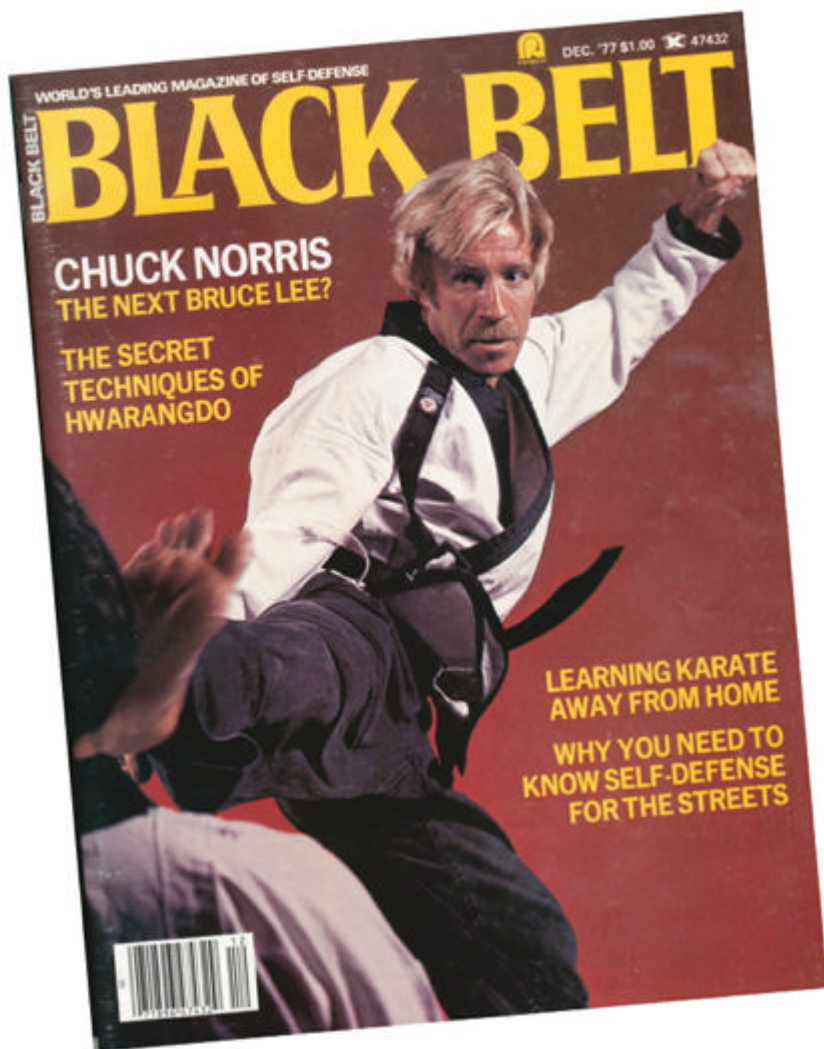


Dear Bruce Lee

by Ohara Publications Inc.

Read about how Bruce Lee's life, his art and his untimely death affected and influenced his worldwide legion of fans. Learn about his art *jeet kune do* through his personal replies to letters he received in 1967. Illustrated with photos of Lee. 96 pgs.

(ISBN-13: 978-0-89750-069-2) **Book Code 407—Retail ~~\$15.95~~ SALE \$4.99**



From the Archives

Vol. 15, No. 12, \$1

The 168th issue of *Black Belt* was dated December 1977. It was 76 pages long and featured Chuck Norris on the cover.

- Sporting a spiffy moustache, Chuck Norris, 37, talks to *Black Belt* about everything that's been happening in his martial arts life. On moviemaking: The champ has appeared in *The Wrecking Crew*, *Yellow Faced Tiger*, *Return of the Dragon*, *Breaker! Breaker!* and *Good Guys Wear Black*.
- On the subject of his past success in martial arts competition, Norris says: "In those days, I was going around training with all the instructors in town. I trained with [Tutomu] Ohshima. I trained with [Fumio] Demura, with [Hidetaka] Nishiyama, with [Tak] Kubota, with everybody, trying to pick up things which would help me enhance my ability."
- A correctional officer from San Quentin State Prison says the facility's staff is making plans to hold an inmates-vs.-the-outside martial arts tournament. Any takers?
- After a hiatus of several years, Mike Stone and Steve Fisher are bringing the Four Seasons Karate Championships back to life in Los Angeles. The event series debuted in the late 1960s when Stone teamed up with Chuck Norris and Bob Wall.
- South Korea holds the Eighth Foreigners and Women Taekwondo Championships at Kukkiwon. Apparently, the two groups are mutually exclusive.
- Century Martial Arts markets the Grabber Glove, which boasts exposed fingers. These days, it might have been dubbed the Grappling Glove.
- *Shotokan* instructor Fred Hamilton is using karate to keep the youth of Jamaica, New York, out of trouble. "Young people are constantly seeking knowledge," he says. "Their quest is

eternal, and they only need someone who cares to guide them in their search."

- Joo Bang Lee pulls back the veil that has shrouded *hwa rang do* for centuries in a *Black Belt* article. Among its treasures: We learn that the English translation of one of the art's categories of little-known techniques is "tearing of human flesh with bare hands."
- Say hello to the Ultimate Nunchaku. By day, this innovative weapon is a rectangular steel *nunchaku*. By night, the user need only unscrew the cable-bearing end caps, add an extra piece or two of metal and *voilà* — it becomes a *tonfa* or a *jo*.
- How can a martial artist lie on the floor with a concrete block on his chest and have a man with a sledgehammer smash it without suffering injury? It's because of the tendency of a body at rest to remain at rest, better known as inertia. This is just one of the many applications of physics in the martial arts, James Toth explains.
- Volume 2 of *Bruce Lee's Fighting Method* is released. The ad tag line for Volume 1 is "Here's how to learn Bruce Lee's self-defense techniques." For the second book, it's "Now you can actually use them."
- In the issue's *dojo* directory can be found a plethora of schools run by current and future luminaries, including Tak Kubota, Joo Bang Lee, Dan Inosanto, Fumio Demura, Hidy Ochiai, Jhoon Rhee, Count Dante, Pu Gill Gwon, Aaron Banks, S. Henry Cho, Jay T. Will, Kang Rhee, Kim Soo and Dan Ivan. What a time to be a martial artist! 🐉

(Note: Back issues are not for sale.)

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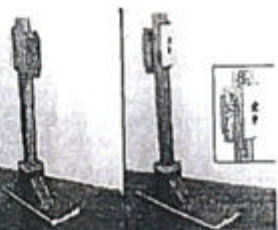
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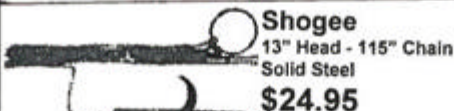
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